The Best Poems of 1925

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THE BEST POEMS OF 1925

THE BEST POEMS OF 1925

EDITED BY

L. A. G. STRONG

Author of "Dublin Days"
Editor of "The Best Poems of 1923" and
"The Best Poems of 1924"

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IN MEMORIAM

AMY LOWELL

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Simultaneous publication in book form, the absence of the authors, and other circumstances have prevented the inclusion of certain poems in this volume. These include the following:

"Intense Comment" and "To a Playing Child," by Maxwell Bodenheim,

"Words," by Babette Deutsch,

"Beside the Pool," by John Freeman,

"A Garden Sequence," by Pamela Gray,

"An East End Curate," by Thomas Hardy,

"Orpheus," by Frank Kendon,

"The Devil is a Woman," by Alice May Kimball,

"Billboards and Galleons," by Vachel Lindsay,

"The North East Corner," by F. R. McCreary,

"En Passant" and "Why He Was There," by E. A. Robinson, and

"Four Little Foxes," by Lew Sarett.

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INTRODUCTION

THE one question which must be continually raised about a book of this kind, is the standard by which poems are included. How is that difficult word 'best' interpreted? Is the choice just arbitrary, or is any attempt made to find a reasoned and objective test of merit?

I had best describe my method, good or bad, in as much detail as I can; because, after all, these questions are perfectly legitimate, and the compiler of any anthology, taking upon himself the onus of elimination, should be ready to answer them.

Having in the course of the year accumulated the files of every possible journal, I start in the spring to read them through. I find it best to devote one period of time entirely to them, instead of dealing with them each week and month as they come. As I read, I cut out and file any poem that makes any definite appeal of any sort whatever. For this first reading I spread the net very wide.

Then, once up to date, so that there are only the current numbers to deal with as they come in, I start upon the process of selection—I was

going to say elimination, but that is hardly the word, for it is the positive side I make for first: I start by deciding which poems absolutely must (*pace* their authors!) be included.

The test, as I have said before, is that of pleasure: pleasure being given by life; personality; sincerity of feeling; music; the skilful overcom ing of difficulty; by many things, but above all by life: that quality which convinces the reader that a reaction to experience has been faithfully expressed in terms of the author's personality. Faithfully expressed; expressed, that is, with economy, with loving care, with honesty, in obedience to that form which the poet has been set as the condition of his task. What that form is matters to no one but to the poet: it is for our intuition to decide whether he has been faithful to it.

In this belief, I try to whittle down my material to the compass of the book. Among the negative tests, questions of technique have a large say: padding, an unmusical line in a poem which aims at music, a line too many: affectation, reminiscence, mimicry; vagueness of epithet, especially in dealing with colour; and so on, and so forth.

There are, of course, one or two exterior considerations—it would be idle to pretend otherwise; but they are quite unimportant. For instance, if it is a matter of choosing between two poems of relatively equal merit, I would rather represent a new author than add a second or

third poem to the tally of one well known; and, where I can, I like to represent a small poetry magazine, even if it means cutting one poem off the double figures of a giant. Sometimes a good poem is ousted by the fact that there is a better one on precisely the same subject, ousted in favour of another good poem upon a different subject; it being perhaps better for the book as a whole to include one good poem about vampires, and one about organ-grinders, than two on either subject. For the book has to be thought of as a whole; a fact often overlooked by every one except the compiler. (We can leave out of the discussion those critics who complain that it has "no unity": for it would be indeed surprising if the work of some eighty or more authors, in unpremeditated and alphabetical conjunction, spoke with united voice.) But the book must, unless I am quite wrong, try to represent the year's verse as a whole. If there were, let us say, ten types of poem predominant in a year, the book should represent all ten by the best available examples of each. Its compiler is not likely to enjoy all the types equally, but he should be capable of judging the examples of them all on their own merits, and including for his readers' benefit, and as the historian of the year's verse, the best of each that he can find.

Considering for a moment the question of representing the year's poetic tendencies, it is im-

possible not to notice, each year, a prevailing trend of ideas, a general direction of the poetic current. Last year, for example, there was a great number of intellectual and religious poems, the predominant interest seeming to lie in the interpretation of life. This year there has been a mass of poetry concerned with the direct personal relationship of one human being to another—a more particular and objective manifestation, maybe, of the former energy. It would be very interesting to examine instances of this infective power of dominant ideas, but we have no time to go into it here; however, let me give just one example. There has been occurring independently, in America and in Britain, a surprising amount of work having for subject the impregnation of the human by the divine. It is fascinating to speculate upon the movements of which these things are, in their several idioms, the expression. I have hopes that the book, if the permissions are obtainable, will duly record this particular subject, which I mention, apart from its own interest, to illustrate one of the ways in which I have to consider the anthology as a whole.

The predominance of intellectual verse in last year's book not surprisingly led one or two critics to accuse me of being too much interested in that aspect of poetry. I do not think I am; not, at any rate, to the extent of according it undue hospitality; but the question of the place of intellect in poetry

is so absorbing in itself, that we might discuss it for a moment. I have had a great deal of most interesting correspondence upon points raised in previous years; and if I express views upon this, or upon any other poetic subject, I hope no one will suppose that they are intended dogmatically, or because I fancy I know anything about the subject in question, but merely in the spirit which prompts us all to talk of our interests to those with whom we share them.

A. E. not long ago concluded a review of a young poet's book with the following words: "The poet knows that the imagination should be master and the intellect slave in the house of the soul, but the intellect has, I think, been the bully in the house so far, and dictated the work and left the imagination to fill in the details. There ought to be a rebellion and the intellect put in its proper place . . . No poet should ever argue with his own muse."

This makes an admirable text. Let us state the opposing principles as extremes. On the one hand we have the poet whom, to avoid definitions,[1] we will call the X type, who in semi-trance records the utterance of his muse direct: on the other, the Y type, who expresses the notions of his intellect in verse. For the moment, let us feel no prefer-

[1] Definitions need so much defining. For example, if I used the word "mystic" here, I should have to explain at once whether I meant the type of mystic who seeks things spiritual by abjuring things temporal, or the type who "seeks on earth what he has found in Heaven."

ence, but take X and Y as the limits of our theme.

The danger of X is that he may easily form the habit of falling into a trance, as it were, in which, with practice on his part, the communications of the muse, visual or auditory, will become increasingly clear: so clear, in fact, that he will begin to depend upon them utterly, and any scrutiny of the resulting poems by the cold light of intellect will seem to him an act of sacrilege. The faculty of "seeing" or "hearing," of objectively dramatising emotion into perception through the senses, is only too easily acquired by the X type: and, once the intellect is lulled asleep, not only nonsense, but memory, will learn to present itself in the guise and accent of revelation. So, when he is charged, as soon or later he must be, with writing nonsense, or with plagiarism, X will be horrified, incredulous, and more and more driven into himself: and his "muse" will comfort him only too well. His poetry will leave the objective plane and cease to be poetry, as we understand the term: "for poets" as Mr. Yeats has said, "are not permitted to shoot beyond the tangible." They must make their vision objective, or fail. (Blake, for example, was the most cunning of poets in writing objectively and simply the all but inexpressible, though one may wonder how far his cunning was deliberate, and, when he did fail, whether it was because the task was impossible, or merely because he did not take sufficient trouble to con-

sider his reader. Still, he was explicit enough upon the danger:—

"Never seek to tell thy love
Love that never told can be . . ."

and knew far too much about visions to be their slave.)

Y is, of course, a far commoner bird than X, and his dangers are far more obvious. He may give his muse so little say that she will desert him in disgust. Or, even if this does not happen, he may so water down his inspiration, in the fear that he is unintelligible, that by the time he has finished all character has gone from it.

These, of course, are the extremes, and most poets lie between them. The comfortable and accepted view of the relation of intellect to muse would seem to be that the poet should listen obediently to his inspiration, set it down, and then subject it to every hostile test the intellect can devise. But even this theory has its difficulties, because it is not possible to draw a sharp line between intellect and pure apprehension. If, accepting for a moment the "muse" terminology, we picture an idea floating outside the material world, seeking for poets to give it a terrestrial currency, and imagine it at last effecting contact with two poets, it is obvious that the forms under which each poet first becomes conscious of its urgency will differ as much as the ultimate forms under which they succeed in making it objective. In

each case, the idea has to become material through a human medium, and from the very first, it must accept the conditions of that medium's genius. By genius I here mean *ingenium*, or poetic individuality: and by intellect, that which expresses the whole personality in an act of judgment. So it is not possible to determine how early the share of intellect begins, however much the ultimate appraisal and labour of the file may be its province alone.

(In answer to a certain objection, which need not be dealt with unless the reader has raised it in his mind:—However much a poet spin a web out of his own bowels, there must be a moment when he becomes objectively aware of it as something outside himself, a moment when he realises what a storm he has raised; and in that instantaneous recognition, it is more than probable that he employs unconsciously that process of selection which distinguishes the artist mind from other minds. Habit and genius will not only influence the use he makes of his impressions, but his very first perception of them—selection will be simultaneous with sight; and selection, the work of judgment, implies the presence of intellect, by the terms of our definition.)

So, between X and Y, we have a Blake, grammatically simple, relying on the evocative power of symbols to communicate those meanings of which there can be no direct manifestation in

words: a Shelley, for all his philanthropy, more intent upon ideas than upon the technical shifts to express them: a Keats, assiduously seeking for the *mot juste*, able to intellectualise his emotions without ever robbing them of spontaneity—perhaps, in his very trouble to express his meaning clearly, a more practical philanthropist than Shelley: and, in our own day, Mr. Yeats, a great poet, passionately interested in ideas and in symbols, yet just as passionately interested in communicating with those of his fellow men who have ears to hear.

The problem is fascinating indeed. We had best leave it with another quotation from the same review by A. E.

"It is right for the poet to use all art and intellect in shaping a speech, but the starry words come like moths to the light, and the poet has to set up a fire in himself to attract them."

There are times when pictures serve us better than definitions: and perhaps one might hazard a guess that in the making of true poetry the intellect is at work all the time, but that a great deal of its work eludes consciousness. If so, the quarrel is really about the amount of conscious work the intellect should do, a matter upon which there can be no dogma, and which each poet must solve for himself.

But what has all this to do with the book? Just this much: that this year, as I have said, there are

a great number of poems dealing with purely human problems, with the relationship of one person to another. To express these the greatest lucidity is necessary, and the poets have sought it. Sometimes the truth, or rather the intellectual eagerness to communicate the truth, has elbowed the muse out of the picture, and we have had good ethics, but bad verses; yet the real point of interest is, that there has been a clear tendency to express general spiritual truths in human and particular terms. Is this tendency a fluke, or does it mean anything? Is it, in its own way, an expression of that practical religion, so very shy of calling itself by any such name, which puts forth its strength in campaigns against cruelty to animals and housing policies? In England, at any rate, there are thousands of men who scorn the name of religion, yet throw themselves into such crusades with an almost furious energy. Are some of the poets like these men? It will be good to see: for never can the future of poetry have been more interesting than now.

I hope, after all this, that there will be found enough poetry of different kinds in the book to acquit me of any charge that I value poetry for other than aesthetic reasons. If, in a short introduction as this, only one subject is raised with each issue of the book, it may suggest that the compiler is exclusively interested in that subject. For my defence I can only refer readers to the

whole book itself, to the past issues of it, and, I hope, to future issues.

There seems to be no need this year for me to go into the box and answer criticisms. Tilts at the last volume were mercifully few. Besides the suggestion that I was unduly preoccupied with poetry of the intellect—which incidentally I find rather flattering!—there were only two definite charges brought against me. One was that I was a poet myself, therefore unfitted for the task of editing an anthology, as my sympathies would not be wide enough. Well, I cannot tell, of course, but I think my taste is fairly catholic; I can certainly enjoy a great many different kinds of poetry. Still, this is a point upon which I naturally can have no profitable opinion—except that I do not see why practical acquaintance with versifying should disqualify any one from appreciating it.

The other, and more definite charge, was that I overrate the importance of the Irish school. Let me say once and for all that I have not the slightest interest in any school, as such: I am interested in the finished product alone, and am quite indifferent to the place or manner of its manufacture. I try to collect those poems which I like, whether they are English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh: and if at the end I have more of one nationality than the other, it means only that the greater number of poems I liked happened to have been written by poets of that nationality.

I may not conclude without referring to the great loss which modern letters have suffered by the death of Amy Lowell. Her great work on Keats is fresh in every one's mind, and last year she published perhaps her finest poem, "Evelyn Ray." But as little things stay in the mind most persistently of all, I shall in thinking of her remember best the wonderful kindliness and cordiality of her letters about her contributions to past issues of the book. One can guess from those letters the loss her own circle has had to bear.

There is just another point, before I stop. A number of poets have most courteously and kindly sent me volumes of their work during the year. Naturally, I am only too delighted to receive these; but I must remind all concerned that, to be eligible for inclusion in these annuals, poems must have appeared in some periodical during the year under review. I mention this again because I do not wish to receive any of these books, as it were, under false pretences.

The period for the next year will be reckoned from 1st June, 1925, to 31st May, 1926. May I once more beg all poets and editors of poetry magazines, who are willing to be represented, to send clippings, or copies of their magazine, to me? A great many poets and editors already do so, and very grateful I am to them. I search every British and American journal I can find: but naturally, there are some which never come my way, or of

which I see, at best, but an odd copy. Many poems must escape me: but I read every one that I can get, and the best way of making sure that I get a poem is to send it to me.

L. A. G. S.

Summer Fields,
Oxford, England.

THE BEST POEMS OF 1925

THE BEST POEMS OF 1925

A HILLMAN

WHAT pent up fury in those arms,
Red gilded by the sun's last breath!
The spade along the ridges runs
As if it had a race with death.

The clods fly right; the clods fly left;
The ridges rise on either side.
The tireless fury is not spent,
Though the fierce sunset long has died.

The strength which tossed the hills on high,
And rent the stormy seas apart,
Is still within those mighty limbs,
Still stirs the dreams of that wild heart.

A. E.

THE OUTCAST

Sometimes when alone
At the dark close of day,
Men meet an outlawed majesty
And hurry away.

They come to the lighted house;
They talk to their dear;
They crucify the mystery
With words of good cheer.

When love and life are over,
And flights at an end,
On the outcast majesty
They lean as a friend.

A. E.

BIRD AND BOSOM—APOCALYPTIC

Turning within the body the ghostly part
Said, When at last dissembling flesh is riven,
A little instant when the flesh is cast,
Then thou most poor, steadfast, defeated heart,
Thou wilt stay dissolution, thou thus shriven,
And we be known at last.

This holy vision there shall be:
The desolate breast, the pinioned bird that sings;
The breast-bones whited ivory,
The bird more fair than phoenix-wings;
And hurt more politic to shun,
It gentles only by its sighs;
And most on the forbidden one
Drop pity and love from the bird's eyes;
And what lips profit not to speak
Is silver chords on the bird's beak.

Alas!

At the dream's end the ghostly member said,
Before these wall are rotted which enmesh
That bird round, is the sweet bird dead.
The swan, they say,
An earthly bird,
Dies all upon a golden breath;
But here is heard
Only the body's rattle against death.
And cried, No way, no way!
And beat this way and that upon the flesh.

Leonie Adams.

ΤΕΤΕΛΕΣΤΑΙ

I

How shall we praise the magnificence of the dead,
The great man humbled, the haughty brought to dust?
Is there a horn we should not blow as proudly
For the meanest of us all, who creeps his days,
Guarding his heart from blows, to die obscurely?
I am no king, have laid no kingdoms waste,
Taken no princes captive, led no triumphs
Of weeping women through long walls of trumpets;
Say rather I am no one, or an atom;
Say rather, two great gods in a vault of starlight
Play ponderingly at chess; and at the game's end
One of the pieces, shaken, falls to the floor
And runs to the darkest corner; and that piece
Forgotten there, left motionless, is I . . .
Say that I have no name, no gifts, no power;
Am only one of millions; mostly silent;
One who came with eyes and hands and a heart,
Looked on beauty, and loved it, and then left it.
Say that the fates of time and space obscured me,
Led me a thousand ways to pain, bemused me,
Wrapped me in ugliness; and like great spiders
Despatched me at their leisure . . . Well, what then?
Should I not hear, as I lie down in dust,
The horns of glory blowing above my burial?

II

Morning and evening opened and closed above me:
Houses were built above me; trees let fall
Yellowing leaves upon me, hands of ghosts;
Rain has showered its arrows of silver upon me
Seeking my heart; winds have roared and tossed
me;
Music in long blue waves of sound has borne me
A helpless weed to shores of unthought silence;
Time, above me, within me, crashed its gongs
Of terrible warning, sifting the dust of death;
And here I lie. Blow now your horns of glory
Harshly over my flesh, you trees, you waters!
You stars and suns, Canopus, Deneb, Rigel,
Let me, as I lie down, here in this dust,
Hear, far off, your whispered salutation!
Roar now above my decaying flesh, you winds,
Whirl out your earth-scents over this body, tell me
Of ferns and stagnant pools, wild-roses, hillsides!
Anoint me, rain, let crash your silver arrows
On this hard flesh! I am the one who named you,
I lived in you and now I die in you.
I, your son, your daughter, treader of music,
Lie broken, conquered. . . . Let me not fall in
silence.

III

I, the restless one, the circler of circles;
Herdsman and roper of stars, who could not
capture

The secret of self; I who was tyrant to weaklings,
Striker of children; destroyer of women; corrupter
Of innocent dreamers, and laugher at beauty; I,
Too easily brought to tears and weakness by music,
Baffled and broken by loves, the helpless beholder
Of the war in my heart of desire with desire, the struggle
Of hatred with love, terror with hunger; I
Who laughed without knowing the cause of my laughter, who grew
Without wishing to grow, a servant to my own body;
Loved without reason the laughter and flesh of a woman,
Enduring such torments to find her! I who at last
Grow weaker, struggle more feebly, relent in my purpose,
Choose for my triumph an easier end, look backward
At earlier conquests; or caught in the web cry out
In a sudden and empty despair *"Tetélestai!"*
Pity me, now! I, who was arrogant, beg you!
Tell me, as I lie down, that I was courageous.
Blow horns of victory now as I reel and am vanquished.
Shatter the sky with trumpets above my grave.

IV

. . . Look! this flesh, how it crumbles to dust and is blown!

These bones, how they grind in a granite of frost
and are nothing!
This skull—how it yawns for a flicker of time in
the darkness
Yet laughs not and sees not! it is crushed by a
hammer of sunlight,
And the hands are destroyed. . . . Press down
through the leaves of the jasmine,
Dig through the interlaced roots—nevermore will
you find me.
I was no better than dust, yet you cannot replace
me. . . .
Take the soft dust in your hand—does it stir,
does it sing?
Has it lips and a heart? Does it open its eyes
to the sun?
Does it run, does it dream, does it burn with a
secret, or tremble
In terror of death? or ache with tremendous de-
cisions? . . .
Listen! . . . It says: "I lean by the river. The
willows
Are yellowed with bud. White clouds roar up
from the south
And darken the ripples; but they cannot darken
my heart,
Nor the face like a star in my heart! . . . Rain
falls on the water
And pelts it and rings it with silver. The willow-
trees glisten,

The sparrows chirp under the eaves; but the face
in my heart
Is a secret of music. . . . I wait in the rain and
am silent."
Listen again! . . . It says: "I have worked, I
am tired,
The pencil dulls in my hand; I see through the
window
Walls upon walls of windows with faces behind
them,
Smoke floating up to the sky, an ascension of
sea-gulls.
I am tired, I have struggled in vain, my decision
was fruitless.
Why then do I wait? with darkness, so easy, at
hand! . . .
But tomorrow . . . perhaps . . . I will wait
and endure till tomorrow!" . . .
Or again: "It is dark. The decision is made. I
am vanquished
By terror of life. The walls mount slowly about
me
In coldness. I had not the courage. I was for-
saken.
I cried out, was answered by silence. . . .
Tetélestai!" . . .

V

Hear how it babbles!—Blow the dust out of your
hand,

With its voices and visions, tread on it, forget it,
turn homeward
With dreams in your brain. . . . This, then, is the
humble, the nameless,—
The lover, the husband and father, the struggler
with shadows,
The one who went down under shoutings of chaos!
The weakling
Who cried his "forsaken!" like Christ on the dark-
ening hilltop! . . .
This, then, is the one who implores, as he dwindles
to silence,
A fanfare of glory. . . . And which of us dares
to deny him!

CONRAD AIKEN.

WHIM ALLEY

Whim Alley once led into Danger Court
Loud with the raucous talk of cockatoos,
Where bearded Jews a-squat in alcoved shops
Sat waiting like royal falcons in a mews.
Softly as rain the voweled Portuguese
Fell from their red-ripe lips with eastern news
Of galleons whose names were melodies—
Softly—between the shrieks of cockatoos.
Who cared for royal navigation laws
In Danger Court—for what the Soldan said—
Or papal lines between the east and west?
Abram out-Shylocked Isaac, with applause,
And clutched the sweated doubloons to his chest,
Whose late-lamented owners were scarce dead.
For there were smugglers' bargains to be made
Where leaping arches looped along the walls,
While sunlight smouldered down the long arcade
And dizened into flame on Spanish shawls.
And what the sequin brought in Louis d'or
Was news—and rumors passed from Trebizond,
While Rachel clinked brass anklets in a door
With a straight glimpse of blue sea just beyond.
Dark sailors passed with tang of wine and tar,
And merchants in wide hats and wider fringes,
And two black sambos smoked the same cigar
Upon a chest with three locks and five hinges.
Vanished in air! Those arches roof a cow,

To parrots' rings the frowzy hens resort;
Whim Alley leads to less than nothing now,
For only shadows dwell in Danger Court.

HERVEY ALLEN.

CATHEDRAL AT NIGHT

Huge as a precipice in the summer night
The black porch yawned above him like a wave
And swallowed him. Shrunk to a grain of sand
He paused inside, bewildered at a sense
Of so much height and darkness, till his eyes
Gained strength, and in the emptiness dark shapes—
Pinnacled rocks and towering trunks of stone—
Loomed round him and, high hung above, like long pale banners,
Tall windows showed. And it seemed the whole void cavern
Vibrated, sensitive as a strung harp,
For his shy footfalls woke a spreading trouble
That echoed from furthest galleries and vaults
Awareness of his presence. He crossed the transept,
And climbed to the loft hung like a falcon's nest
On the sheer face of the triforium,
From which the towering shafts of organ-pipes
Rose up like tropic growths. There, round about him,
The music-books, the rows of stops, the close
Familiar walls of oak glowed as a core
Of radiance in the darkness, and he sought
Books of old music, chose his stops, began.
Vague tremors shook the stillness, voices woke,
And the emptiness was peopled with the life
Of crowding notes. Down the wide nave, along

Cold aisles, through secret chapels, hanging vaults,
Flowed the warm circulation of sweet sounds
Like health into a body long diseased:
Byrd, Taverner and all the old English music-makers
Woke from the dead and their immortal voices
Flooded the dark shrine with a golden beauty;
While he, the player, with cunning fingers piling
Sound upon sound, harmony on harmony,
Launched out his spirit upon those tides of music
Until it grew and filled the shadowy place,
Swung with the arches, soared to the topmost vault,
Put on the whole great structure as a garment,
Sang with those ancient voices as with its own,
And on the summit of the last pure chord
Found unity and peace. He raised his hands:
The music stopped, and his full-statured spirit
Shrivelled. The horror of sheer height hung above him,
The horror of sheer depth was scooped below,
And silence fell like doom. Out in the dark,
Blind windows hung, dumb columns rose—vast shapes
Upholding the heavy foliage of the night;
And Darkness, Emptiness, like birds of prey,
Swooped back and perched about him, grimly still;
While he, as in the bright cup of a flower,
Rigid, with sharpened senses, hung besieged.

MARTIN ARMSTRONG.

FOG

In the fog
Of that December dawn
Man and dog
Were sucked into mist, drawn
Into a silver bog.

Fog like wool
Softened the duck's horn,
Cow and bull
Strayed steaming, forlorn,
Ghostly, beautiful.

It seemed that I
Had somehow come nearer
Beast and sky:
I seemed to see clearer
With the fog standing by.

Joseph Auslander.

TANGENT

Now, for a moment, at the end of all,
As you grin, absinthe-colored in the glare
Of the spotlight lunging at your teeth and hair
Before the curtain's redundant angels sprawl
Down and the bulbs flush dully on the wall—
I, from wherever I sit, you, standing there,
Across the clapping palms and sweaty air
Have held a dream awhile—and let it fall.

We will not name it love or lust, nor pause
To pick the poor swift fragments from the floor;
I leave you with your paint and your applause;
The brilliant street is beating on the door. . . .
It matters nothing if a dead dream gnaws
A little: dreams have done as much before.

JOSEPH AUSLANDER.

LOST

When the boy knocked at our door, looking in,
We remember now that we spoke to him timidly,
Kept him waiting in the porch,
While we busied ourselves within over a fitting
reception.

When we called him,
We found the porch empty.
Hop-vines and ivy trembled there,
A frame lacking its picture.
Nor can any tell us
Whether he ran along the road or the field-path.

Iris Barry.

As we came back from Woodford Fair
With Grace and Lil, said Jack to me
"We'll go the river way, for there
It's dark, and there'll be none to see,"
And so we left the crowds that flock'd
Round the Park Gates to talk and trade,
Or loitered among the booths and mock'd
The sounds the rocket sticks had made,
Or down the dim road began to shrink
Sleepy with stars and harvest cheer,
For we'd had a headier draught to drink
Of an older brew than beer,

And ours was a god whom none might serve
Save hidden by twos from human kind,
In a cup of the downs by the young moon's curve
Or closer at hand in the deep woods shrined,
And the girls laughed soft as the boughs swung
back,
Heavy with dew, from the uncut hedge,
As we groped our way down the keeper's track
Through the fringe of the Park to the water's edge,

And hand touched hand with the first hot thrill
Of the mounting blood and the yielded will,
As we came to the bend where the path broke free
For the breadth of a field till the first dark tree
Of the deep wood's night, unstirr'd, unstarr'd,

O'er the reeds and the ghost-still stream stood
guard,
And our burning eyes in its dark caves spied
The cells where our fast-locked lips should hide,
Where our fast-locked lips should fall and feast
Unchid till their—
There was no sound or turn
Of leaf-cowled head, and we saw burn,
Oh, we saw burn, remote and still,
A million million stars and fill
With their faint altar light the cup
Valley and stream had lifted up,
And we saw hushed in that still fire
Reed, blade, and bulrush, fern and brier,
Hilltop and tree-top, rapt, intent
On that stupendous sacrament,

And yet as we stood, stopped still, and stood,
We four by that unseeing wood,
Beneath those hills, oblivious, bowed,
We four in that uncounted crowd,
Oh, yet it seemed as though some word,
Fainter than breath, a moment stirred,
And sank, and was not, but that thus
Its judgment had been passed on us,

And we two boys, and we two girls,
Turned face from face, and what we'd plann'd
Died from our hearts, and hand in hand
We went from that place.

H. H. Bashford.

THE MOUNTAIN WHIPPOORWILL

How Hill-Billy Jim Won the Great Fiddlers' Prize

(*A Georgia Romance*)

Up in the mountains it's lonesome all the time.
(Sof' win' slewin' th'u' the sweet-potato vine.)

Up in the mountains it's lonesome for a child.
(Whippo'rwills a-callin' when the sap runs wild.)

Up in the mountains, mountains in the fog,
Everythin' 's as lazy as an old houn' dog.

Born in the mountains, never raised a pet,
Don't want nuthin' an' never got it yet.

Born in the mountains, lonesome-born,
Raised runnin' ragged th'u' the cockle-burs and corn.

Never knew my pappy, mebbe never should.
Think he was a fiddle made of mountain laurel-wood.

Never had a mammy to teach me pretty-please.
Think she was a whippo'rwill a-skitin' th'u' the trees.

Never had a brother ner a whole pair of pants,
But when I start to fiddle, why, yuh got to start to dance!

Listen to my fiddle—Kingdom Come! Kingdom Come!
Hear the frogs a-chunkin', "Jug o' rum! Jug o' rum!"
Hear that mountain whippo'rwill be lonesome in the air,
An' I'll tell yuh how I traveled to the Essex County Fair.

Essex County has a mighty pretty fair,
All the smarty fiddlers from the South come there.

Elbows flyin' as they rosin up the bow
For the first prize contest in the Georgia fiddlers' show.

Old Dan Wheeling, with his whiskers in his ears,
King-pin fiddler for nearly twenty years.

Big Tom Sargent, with his blue wall-eye,
An' Little Jimmy Weezer that can make a fiddle cry.

All sittin' roun', spittin' high an' struttin' proud,
(Listen, little whippo'rwill, yuh better bug yore eyes!)
Tun-a-tun-a-tunin' while the jedges told the crowd
Them that got the mostest claps 'd win the bestest prize.

Everybody waitin' for the first tweedledee,
When in comes a-stumblin'—hill-billy me!

Bowed right pretty to the jedges an' the rest,
Took a silver dollar from a hole inside my vest,

Plunked it on the table, an' said, "There's my
callin'-card!
An' any one that licks me— well, he's got to fiddle
hard!"

Old Dan Wheeling he was laughin' fit to holler,
Little Jimmy Weezer said, "There's one dead dol-
lar!"

Big Tom Sargent had a yaller-toothy grin,
But I tucked my little whippo'rwill right under-
neath my chin,
An' petted it an' tuned it till the jedges said,
"Begin!"

Big Tom Sargent was the first in line;
He could fiddle all the bugs off a sweet-potato-vine,

He could fiddle down a possum from a mile-high
tree,
He could fiddle up a whale from the bottom of
the sea.

Yuh could hear hands spankin' till they spanked
each other raw
When he finished variations on "Turkey in the
Straw."

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Little Jimmy Weezer was the next to play;
He could fiddle all night, he could fiddle all day,

He could fiddle chills, he could fiddle fever,
He could make a fiddle rustle like a lowland river,

He could make a fiddle croon like a lovin' woman,
And they clapped like thunder when he'd finished strummin'.

Then came the ruck of the bob-tailed fiddlers,
The let's-go-easies, the fair-to-middlers.

They got their claps, an' they lost their bicker,
An' settled back for some more corn-licker.

An' the crowd was tired of their no-'count squealing,
When out in the center steps Old Dan Wheeling.

He fiddled high and he fiddled low,
(*Listen, little whippo'rwill, yuh got to spread yore wings!*)
He fiddled with a cherry-wood bow.
(*Old Dan Wheeling's got bee-honey in his strings.*)

He fiddled the wind by the lonesome moon,
He fiddled a most almighty tune.

He started fiddling like a ghost,
He ended fiddling like a host.

He fiddled north an' he fiddled south,
He fiddled the heart right out of yore mouth.

He fiddled here and he fiddled there,
He fiddled salvation everywhere.

When he was finished the crowd cut loose,
(Whippo'rwill, they's rain on yore breast.)
And I sat there wonderin', "What's the use?"
(Whippo'rwill, fly home to yore nest!)

But I stood up pert, and I took my bow,
And my fiddle went to my shoulder, so.

And they wasn't no crowd to get me fazed,
But I was alone where I was raised.

Up in the mountains, so still it makes yuh skeered,
Where God lies sleepin' in his big white beard.

And I heard the sound of the squirrel in the pine,
And I heard the earth a-breathin' th'u' the long night-time.

They've fiddled the rose an' they've fiddled the thorn,
But they haven't fiddled the mountain-corn.

They've fiddled sinful an' fiddled moral,
But they haven't fiddled the breshwood-laurel.

They've fiddled loud an' they've fiddled still,
But they haven't fiddled the whippo'rwill.

I started off with a *dump-diddle-dump,*
(*Oh, hell's broke loose in Georgia!*)
Skunk-cabbage growin' by the bee-gum stump.
(*Whippo'rwill, yo' 're singin' now!*)

Oh, Georgia booze is mighty fine booze,
The best yuh ever poured yuh,
But it eats the soles right offen yore shoes,
For hell's broke loose in Georgia.

My mother was a whippo'rwill pert,
My father he was lazy,
But I'm hell-broke loose in a new store shirt
To fiddle all Georgia crazy.

Swing your partners—up and down the middle!
Sashay now—oh, listen to that fiddle!
Flapjacks flippin' on a red-hot griddle,
And hell broke loose,
Hell broke loose,
Fire on the mountains, snakes in the grass,
Satan's here a-bilin'—oh, Lordy, let him pass!
Go down Moses, set my people free,
Pop goes the weasel th'u' the old Red Sea!
Jonah sittin' on a hickory bough,
Up jumps a whale—an' where's yore prophet now?
Rabbit in the pea-patch, possum in the pot,
Try an' stop my fiddle now my fiddle's gettin' hot!

Whippo'rwill singin' th'u' the mountain hush,
Whippo'rwill shoutin' from the burnin' bush,
Whippo'rwill cryin' in the stable door,
Sing to-night as yuh never sang before!
Hell's broke loose like a stompin' mountain-shoat,
Sing till yuh bust the gold in yore throat!
Hell's broke loose for fo'ty miles aroun',
Bound to stop yore music if yuh don't sing it down.
Sing on the mountains, little whippo'rwill,
Sing to the valleys, an' slap 'em with a hill,
For I'm struttin' high as an eagle's quill,
An' hell's broke loose.
Hell's broke loose,
Hell's broke loose in Georgia!

They wasn't a sound when I stopped bowin',
(*Whippo'rwill, yuh can sing no more.*)
But somewhere or other the dawn was growin',
(*Oh, mountain whippo'rwill!*)

An' I thought, "I've fiddled all night and lost.
Yo're a good hill-billy, but yuh've been bossed."

So I went to congratulate old man Dan,
But he put his fiddle into my han'—
An' then the noise of the crowd began.

STEPHEN VINCENT BENET.

THE DAIMYO'S POND

The swallows come on swift and daring wings,
Their daring wings to dip with pure delight
In the mild pond: once more a kind fate brings
My heart that moment, and the world is bright.
The lilies there, the white ones and the red,
From the green cloudy deeps look up to heaven,
And antique holm-oaks sheltering their calm bed
Seem blessing Earth that has such duty given.

Look how that old man, face like parchment tanned,
Wrinkled, mouth-shrivelled, silently is come
To the high bank, a bucket in his hand—
He beats upon it as it were a drum:
He beats a solemn summoning monotone,
And through the secrecies that under shroud,
The water-shapes steal toward his gonging drone,
The lonelinesses gather in a crowd.

Moon-pallid some come gliding through the green,
Great fishes, yet for phantoms passing well;
Others like opals rosy-rayed convene,
Jewels of June waters, to that simple bell;
Dark as barbaric dreams, there others swim,
And now to that old labourer's wish a host
Of splendours circle mingling, to the brim
Fanning and fawning, flame and dream and ghost.

Would that I might by means as plain as this
  Bring many a mystery from life's shadowy pool,
Enchant the live gems from the unknown abyss,
  And make them seen, the strangely beautiful;
What measured syllables must I resound,
  O, what most simple and most secret spell
For hidden fancies waits there to be found?
  Who knows that dim probatum, and will tell?

EDMUND BLUNDEN.

OMEN

Now the day is dead, I cried,
The sky stretched mute and mortified,
The sun gone, the clouds biding,
The due stars in dungeons hiding.
Lantern venturing its short glow,
I went to put the lodge-doors to,
And tiffling there heard hardly aware
A harsh high harmony along the air;
Some steel-bit fox in the western wood,
The mind's rote idly understood—
And yet that wild voice rose and grew
Until I stood and strained for a view.
Dogs in kennels began to bark,
"There's queer things choose this kind of dark";
And here it comes creeping yelp on yelp,
Along the hedge to us for help,
The wood-child with man's torture racked
Dares seek him out, if he'll retract.

No fox was this. Ho, look to the air!
The grayness showed a wonder there,
Piteous sobbing in an instant grown
The round of one man-careless tone.
A wave of wild geese there was flying,
Antheming what just seemed pain's crying,
All the swishing wings straight steering,
East in a solemn progress bearing;
Majesty with these was going,

Music in that shrill clangour flowing.
East went the god-disclosing flight.
I shut my doors up for the night.

EDMUND BLUNDEN.

THE GLEEMAN

The heat he beat from snow and sleet
Made all the salt North Ocean sweet,
When down the harp from his fingers fleet
Ran the storm on roaring feet.

No more with roar of wave on boar
His chant shall challenge the sons of Thor
To scour the ocean and scourge the shore;
His hand is heavy. His hair hoar.

So deep is sleep where the Norlands heap
Over his bones the ice-hills steep!
The cold sea-moss to his side doth creep,
His eyes are wet and he shall not weep;

But wield on field and foam unkieled
Heroes' hearts, where hearts are healed
From dark to dawn, till doom be dealed
To singing sword and shouting shield.

F. V. Branford.

THE OLD MEN AND THE YOUNG MEN

Said the old men to the young men,
"Who will take arms to be free?"
Said the young men to the old men,
"We."

Said the old men to the young men,
"It is finished. You may go."
Said the young men to the old men,
"No."

Said the old men to the young men,
"What is there left to do?"
Said the young men to the old men,
"You."

WITTER BYNNER.

A YOUNG GIRL

Her eye is on fire
With a sharper greed
Than the heavenly eagle's
For Ganymede . . .

Blood
Is what she will get if she can
And be content,
Blood of a man.

Her sweep
Of talons at the face
Seems to a boy
Glittering grace.

And yet her eye
Is wide and clear
With little more in it
Than fear,

And all the plumage
Of her dress
Is only swiftness
To possess,

Is a wing to swoop,
But never to fly,
Not to see
High mountains by.

Follow her,
Like a wind she goes;
Hesitate,
Backward she blows.

Doubt her at all
There's a knife in her lip
And her words are the whining
Of a whip,

And her young laugh changes
In mid-air:
You hear a shrilling
Harlot swear.

When
Will she at last have done
With the thousand men she wants
In one!

When
Will she rather be alone
Than find the broken heart
Her own?

WITTER BYNNER.

NO PILOTS WE

WOULD I were one of those who preach no Cause—
Nor guide mankind with meddling fingertips;
But let each star that moves without a pause
Shine as it list—as potent when it dips
Beyond their ken in visual eclipse
As when it blazes in a darkling sky,
Regnant and beautiful, while with mute lips
Men bow the head in worship, or in shy
And inexpressive words admit that God is nigh.

We are no pilots: let us trust our bark,
Miraculous, alert, not made with hands,
That feels a magic impulse through the dark,
And leaps upon the course it understands
From shores unknown to unimagined strands;
Resists the helm we give it, but divines—
Being itself divine—divine commands;
And answers to no compass save the signs
Encircling deepest heaven where the Zodiac shines

JOHN JAY CHAPMAN.

THE MESSENGER

It was that time of tender light
When eastern slopes shine like the rose;
Before the lashes of the night
Droop wanly, ere the eyelids close.

A quietness, profound, intense,
Made the one robin's song a word
Of intuitive innocence,
A portent such as men have heard
When soul-catastrophies have stirred
Their senses to a quickened pace.

I listened, hushed with reverence,
Rich with a sudden gift of grace
In that dark and lonely place.

Richard Church.

THE LOST HEIFER

(A Jacobite Song)

When the black herds of the rain were grazing
In the gap of the pure cold wind
And the watery hazes of the hazel
Brought her into my mind,
I thought of the last honey by the water
That no hive can find.

Brightness was drenching through the branches
When she wandered again,
Turning the silver out of dark grasses
Where the skylark had lain,
And her voice coming softly over the meadow
Was the mist becoming rain.

Austin Clarke.

THE BAD KITTENS

You may call, you may call,
But the little black cats won't hear you,
The little black cats are maddened
By the bright green light of the moon,
They are whirling and running and hiding,
They are wild who were once so confiding
They are crazed when the moon is riding—
You will not catch the kittens soon.
They care not for saucers of milk,
They think not of pillows of silk,
Your softest, crooningest call
  Is less than the buzzing of flies.
They are seeing more than you see,
They are hearing more than you hear
And out of the darkness they peer
With a goblin light in their eyes.

Elizabeth J. Coatsworth.

THE THREE MISSES BARKER

Such tea party furies,
Such powdered head tossings,
Such bright angry glances,
Such shrill hot words—
But the three Misses Barker were like a little garrison,
And they held out for their king
In a land of rebels.

The years went by,
And the years went by,
And arguments cooled,
And eyebrows went up,
And fashions changed,
And many things were forgotten
But the three Misses Barker did not surrender—
They were loyal to their king
In a land of rebels.

The grandchildren of their schoolmates
Were young men and women
Who giggled and chuckled
At worn out heart burnings,
But the three Misses Barker held their heads the higher
And died fifty years after the Declaration of Independence,
Still true to their king
In a land of rebels.

Elizabeth J. Coatsworth.

EAGLES AND SNAILS

If eagles, mole-like, burrowed through the clay,
And moles, like eagles, perched on peaks of fire;
If robins, hog-like, wallowed in the mire,
And hogs had marble halls in which to play,
The world would not be stranger than today,
When winged souls must bind themselves for hire,
To dusty trade, and snails at birth acquire
Kingdoms for which proud lions vainly pray!

Here is a skylark spirit drably moiling
In costume of a beetle; there is one
That like an ant is foraging and toiling,
Yet with fleet wings might soar into the sun!
Ah, should one laugh to see, or should one weep?—
Sheep in the rôle of wolves, wolves in the rôle of sheep!

Stanton A. Coblentz.

On the third day from this (Saint Brendan said)
I will be with my fathers, going hence,
For God will then a mighty trumpet blow:
And from the prison of this body then
I shall go forth; make ready, you, to go
With what remains to Cluan Hy-many,
For there my resurrection I'd have be.

But you will know how hard they'll strive to gain
My resurrection for this place, and keep
My body for the mould where I was born:
The waggon that our goods are carried in—
Have it yoked up between the night and morn,
And, when the breath is from my body gone,
Bear it without; the waggon lay it on;

And cover it with gear that's taken hence:
"The goods of Brendan is what's here," you'll say
To those who'll halt you; they will pass you then:
But you'll meet one who will not; a soldier he,
Armed and ugly, a putter-down of men,
Curryn his name, blind of the left eye:
He'll halt the waggon, and on you he'll cry:

"What bear you hence?" and he will question you,
Beating you down; he'll to the waggon go,
And, 'spite your pleading, pull the gear about:
He'll come upon my body where it's laid;

Then this man Curryn will raise up a shout:
"What means this move? With us his burial,
For we would give him reverence over all!"

And then to that that's on the waggon laid,
"O saint of God, be with us still," he'll cry,
"Your resurrection we would have with ours":
He'll push it back until the waggon wheel,
Making a trench, the wayside gravel scours:
You'll look; and in the gravelly rut, behold!
All glistening there, a thumb-sized piece of gold!

Offer to him the gold was sent by God
To be my body's ransom, but that man
Will take it not, nor let the waggon by:
"We would be sanctified in this body's rise,
And have a portion in its bliss," he'll cry;
"Not all your hands could hold would make a
bribe,
No, nor the Chieftain's power in my tribe."

Then you will say, "Unless eternal life
You would have forfeit, let this body pass:
Else the cold flag of Hell will be your bed."
And say, that he may know how sure it is,
The doom that you have cast upon his head,
"You, Curryn, blind of an eye, have even now
Planned in your heart a faithless thing to do."

"Usurp the Chieftan's power in your tribe
By slaying all between you and that place,

Uncles and foster-brothers, man and youth":
He'll know then that Hell's flag-stone is no doom
Uttered by lips unknowing, but is sooth:
He'll beat his breast, and let it go, that load,
And you will pass, mounting the ridge of road.

And, looking back, you'll see beside that man
Tinkers and tailors, soldiers, farmers, smiths,
The people of the place, all stirred up then.
He'll hold them back; you'll go upon your way,
Leaving behind you all those stark men
For whom my virtue was a legacy
That they would profit in, each a degree.

As though it were indeed some chalice, staff,
Crozier, or casket that they might come to,
And show to those who chanced upon the way.
And have, not knowing how the work was done,
In scrolls and figures, and in bright inlay;
Whence came the gold and silver that they prize,
The blue enamels, and the turquoises!

I, Brendan, had a name came from the sea:
I was the first who sailed the outer main,
And past all forelands and all fastnesses!
I passed the voiceless anchorites, their isles,
Saw the ice-palaces upon the seas,
Mentioned Christ's name to men cut off from men,
Heard the whales snort, and saw the Kraken!

And on a wide-branched, green, and glistening tree
Beheld the birds that angels had been erst—
Between the earth and heaven 'twas theirs to wing!
Fallen from high they were, but they had still
Music of Heaven's court: I heard them sing:
Even now that Island of the unbeached coast,
I see, and see the white resplendent host!

For this they'd have my body in this place,
Their hillside, and my resurrection be
Out of the mould that they with me would share.
But I have chosen Cluan for my ground;
A happy place! Some grace came to me there:
And you, as you go towards it, to men say
Should any ask you on that long highway:

"Brendan is here who had great saints for friends:
Ita, who reared him on a mother's knee;
Enda, who from his fastness blessed his sail;
Then Brighid, she who had the flaming heart,
And Colum-cille, prime of all the Gael;
Gildas of Britain, wisest child of light."
And saying this, drive through the falling night.

PADRAIC COLUM.

FRAIL FLAME

She is too slight for harm;
Any man could lift
And toss her across his arm
Like a scarf-drift.

Her hair is faded gold;
Her eyes are blue.
She loves shaded old
Scarf-colors too.

She loves a cloak of flame—
How did such a stir,
Such a dark smoke of fame,
Every spread from her?

What a dark shadow
For a frail flame!—
Like smoke above the meadow
They spread her name.

Isabel Fiske Conant.

THE INVISIBLE RAIN

Alone with thoughts that chill me
I sit reading,
I sit with an open book at my open door:
I see the mist arise
And coil like a subtle wrestler round the hill,
While an invisible rain
Falling like air upon fruit and leaf,
In time grows glittering to an orb
And drops.
Cheerly a cock crows,
And then cheerly his brother;
The old smith beats upon his worn anvil;
I read in the book of pride, and wisdom, and
destiny,
But each page as I turn it is forgotten:
For I feel your distant love,
I feel your love
Beyond all the distance that denies it,
Fall with the invisible rain,
And merge in those glittering tears.

A. E. Coppard.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

THE stacks, like blunt impassive temples, rise
Across flat fields against the autumnal skies.
The hairy-hoovèd horses plough the land,
Or, as in prayer and meditation, stand
Upholding square, primeval, dung-stained carts
With a monotonous patience in their hearts.

Nothing is changed. The farmer's gig goes by
Against the horizon. Surely, the same sky
So vast, and yet familiar, gray and mild,
And streaked with light like music, I, a child,
Lifted my face from leaf-edged lanes, to see,
Late-coming home, for bread-and-butter tea.

FRANCES CORNFORD.

EPITAPH

For a Mouthy Woman

God and the devil still are wrangling
  Which should have her, which repel:
God wants no discord in His heaven;
  Satan has enough in hell.

Countee P. Cullen.

THE mountain road bent round a cliff,
And there I found him, motionless.
Ferns touched his knee; wild columbine climbed
higher;
And from the moist, green ledge above his head
A bunch of water-berries trembled
As if to reach and crown him.
I hailed him, for his gifts to me
Were warm as youth and friendship; but his eyes
Dropped dull as falling birds. I lingered,
Trying to put their light back,
And speech at last rushed at me,
A voluble wind.

"I'm up and out by daylight now,
But not to be ahead o' the sun
On Katterhay Knob. I've got to plough.
No end at all to the rows and rows.
I've hardly a minute to look at the crows.
Once when I heard a redbird call
I made my hands like a whistling cup,
And blew and called just like he sings,
Then stood to watch him skewin' up
With the sun a-bubblin' on his wings;
But old man Gow he rumbled along
And asked if I wasn't hurtin' the ground
Ploughin' so mighty strong.
And he reckoned I'd have enough to pay

The doctor against the baby come
If I cut along at a row a day.
Then something more 'bout folks being clutter,
And if my wife was as lazy at home
We'd better move up to the poah-farm now,
And he'd get a man whose hands wa'an't butter
When they took aholt of a plough."

He paused and drew a breath long, sharp and thin,
That cut his thought in moody halves;
Then speech came slower, a little weighed
With tagging memories; with half-born hopes,
And wonders bright and wingless,
Dying before they left his heart.

"And Emmie, I don't know her now.
She works and sews,
As busy as me in the long field-rows.
Of mornings before I go,
She gets the breakfast and milks the cow,
Then hurries to sweep and make the bed,
So she can sit and sew.
Her hair is tight around her head,
In crinkled ropes, 'cause her mother grinned
And hinted and sniffed till she had it pinned;
And I wish she never had come about;
For Emmie's hair when she let it fly
Made me think o' the yellow rye
When a July storm comes quick and the wind

Blows it backward up the hill.
It's queer to see it smooth and still,
Tho' it's shiny yet as a sleepy trout.
She says it's got to be out o' the way,
With so much to do and more ahead,
And a lookin' glass won't earn our bread.
When I hurry in at the end of a day
She hands me the bucket and I start for the spring,
And I'm not more than half way back,
Thinkin' I'll clear my throat and sing,
When she calls to know if the mare's been fed,
'And there's wood to get, and the fodder's to pack
Out o' that leaky shed—'
And when at last I get to a chair
I don't believe she knows I am there.
She flies about like a little gold bee,
Till there's twenty women around the stove,
And strangers all to me.

"But when she's asleep she's the Emmie I love;
Paler a lot than she used to be;
Her hair all down and trembling bright
In the moonlight dropped like a wispy cloth
Through the window on her; it don't seem right
For me to look, no more'n a thief.
Her eyelids are soft as a white, shut moth;
I know if I touched 'em they'd feel like silk;
But I wouldn't wake her, no, I'd as lief
Hit her almost. In sleep, they say
She's making the baby's milk.

And I'm too tired to watch for long,
So I turn my face away from the moon,
And shut my eyes and think of the song
I made for her on Katterhay,
And sleep, and dream we'll be married soon."

The light was there now, in his eyes,
Like gathered, golden blades.
Above him, in a gust, the berries swayed,
Red as his vivid lips; and from a heart
Too full to close its door, his voice pitched out,
Leaving the air a passion.

Girl I love, girl I love,
Do not stand in the meadow!
A stranger may break
The stem of your body
And set in his nosegay
Your head honey-colored.

Girl I love, girl I love,
Do not stand by the water!
You may fall to the stream,
And how shall I find you
And know which is mine
Among the floating lilies?

The berries trembled downward to his hair,
As if an elf hand bent them. I thought the stream,
Babbling a ritournelle, reached for his feet;

But he was still.
"She liked the song, Karl?"

"Ay, she liked it well.
And all that fluttering day,
If I just touched her, she was like a bell
About to ring; but not a thing she'd say;
Not even that she loved me; but each time she took
My hand 'twas like she laid
A birdie in it, warm and not afraid;
And my heart was like a windy tree
Full of little leaves. Right now I see,
With my eyes shut, each turn and crook
In the trail that day; and I want to die
When I can't remember every step we made.
But I reckon Emmie has forgot.
This morning she lay asleep, with the sky
All pink about her. It wouldn't be wrong
To make her dream of me, I thought;
And with half my breath I sang the song.
Just a whisper it was; but up she flew
With 'My, it's late, and what's to do!
You ought 'a' been out 'fore good daybreak!'
A shiftless daddy she's sure I'd make.
The dear little thing would starve, she knew!

"When I got to the field I couldn't think.
My heart was hot and burning black.
'Way up in the brush I heard the bleat
Of a little lost lamb, and I didn't go

To put it right. When I saw the pink
Of sarvice buds at the end of a row
I felt they were blooming wild and sweet
In a world I didn't know.
I thought o' the woods where I used to track;
Moonfeather falls, and the leaning ash;
The three blue springs where the raccoons drink;
The long, slim lake like a painted sash
Dropped from the sky for the woods to wear;
And I reckoned how if I went back
That *they* wouldn't know I was there.

"At noon when I stopped to feed the mare
I didn't go in to eat.
I knew that you'd be climbin' up,
And you always stop by the Drippin' Shelf,
To watch it, just as I do myself;
So I waited here to ask you why
Life's got to be nothing but work and sup,
However I turn or try.
Why the sun that shouted 'Karl, let's go,'
Drags like a coal across the sky,
As tired as me and achin' slow;
And the wood is only a shut, green door,
And every day is just one more.
I thought I'd ask you if you knew
What a man that's troubled like me can do."

No other word fell in that place.
As one who hears too much is still

As though he has not heard
I waited dumb, apace,
Watching his eyes drop lightless as at first
And all their fortune spill.
A curious twist
Came to his lips just as I lost his face
In warm and sudden mist
That round my eyes' hot lashes stirred.
Above the stillness a loud bird
Sang resolute, as if the lid
Of some vast trouble-pot had burst
Beneath his startled throat
And he must drown if he should mute one note.
I moved to where the bloom
Of a silver haw-bush splashed and hid
My silence from the throttling gloom
About the boy; then slowly found my road;
Taking, and leaving, the old, imponderable load.

Olive Tilford Dargan.

The mixed grass that never ripens, dark green, salt-strong,
And blue flower-shocks that I name after wind, shake and stand,
Gather and cast water, spread and beat the ground
That has come out of the green sea and into light.
The grass moves as if listening to the sea quickened its blades.
Here I would invent praise, and have learned no other than to name
The kinds of grass here: the great bunches of blue
Windflowers that leak shining water; big-stemmed vetch;
Yellow and black snapdragons; wild strawberry runners;
Cheat- and rib-grass with white pollen rimming its dark heads:
You land attained out of the dark places of the sea!
I am not ashamed praising by count this grass
Standing in the wind; and once I could not sleep,
Ashamed because I could find no praise except reckoning
How surely a woman gained beauty, whose white arms,
Whose white flesh became like the cold foam and gave me no peace.
But now the old praise is enough, since there come here

A few children with cattle, or old women of this land
Walk in the grass I thought gallant, and on the hill
I thought came out of the bright-watered and commanding sea.

H. L. Davis.

DIALOGUE

"You shall put on corruption like a dress,"
The Spirit, scornful of the Body, said,
And smiled its lipless smile. "When once you bed
With the last lover of all men's mistresses,
Then you shall blot your nightgown's finest thread—
Yourself will crawl from your fastidiousness.

"These eyes wherewith you look upon dark sheaves
Whetted by evening gold—these eyes will break;
Of this tongue death will eat, and it will take
The subtle wrist, this brow that frowns and grieves,
And your tranced mother and your child will quake
To touch the shameful, vacant thing it leaves."

The Body listened to its tenant, sighed,
But nothing said, until, taking the glass,
It asked, "And when this that I am shall pass,
Where will you stay to see me crucified?
Will you share that blind cold below the grass?"
And shook, to hear the cry the Spirit cried.

Babette Deutsch.

APRIL'S AMAZING MEANING

April's amazing meaning doubtless lies
  In tall, hoarse boys and slips
Of slender girls with suddenly wider eyes
  And parted lips;

For girls must wander pensive in the spring
  When the green rain is over,
Doing some slow inconsequential thing,
  Plucking clover;

And any boy alone upon a bench
  When his work's done will sit
And stare at the black ground and break a branch
  And whittle it

Slowly; and boys and girls, irresolute,
  Will curse the dreamy weather
Until they meet past the pale hedge and put
  Their lips together.

George H. Dillon.

RENUNCIATION

It is written in the book of Meng Tzu,
that he who cannot fulfil his charge
must relinquish it.

I have no choice.
I lift my hand from your soul,
and give you back to the world.

William A. Drake.

THE WITCH-BALL

(In some country places they hang up a blue glass ball as a charm against Witches.)

NEVER, oh never came
Witch in this garden,
We would not pardon
Would we, dear, anyone
Who should say things were done,
Such as in hell they name,
Here in our garden?
Never was poison-root
In this Hesperides
Girdled by gentle trees;
Mould that our lilies made
Mothered no night shade;
Never passed Endor's foot
Over so smooth a green
Lawn as is laid between
Borders that virtue
Only can print
Of pansies and mint,
With no herb to hurt you.
Here where the thrush and jay,
Robin and linnet,
Find through the longest day
Songs for each minute,
No path or plantation
Ever has heard
Vext incantation

With song of the bird;
Never a muttered spell
Learnt in the writ of hell,
Psalter obscene,
On warlock or witch's lip
Whispered in stewardship
Curst and unclean.
The day and the night
Are holy, all hours,
With heaven alight
Again in the flowers;
All blossoms by day
Flashing back to the sun
Many beams to repay
The succour of one;
All blossoms when sweet
Stars of even have birth,
Lying orbed at our feet,
Pale planets of earth,
And, chaste beyond whisper
Of sorcerer's rune
Moon-virgin when Hesper
Is lost in the moon.
Go comrade, go lover,
Go pass through the portal,
Laugh and rest, till your mortal
Date falls as it must
To the gospel of dust,
And the dark wing shall cover
The sun from our portal.

Till then laugh and rest,
While the garden shall keep
All charms that are best
For fortune and sleep;
Clean rites to deliver
Roof-timber and stair
And hearthstone for ever
From plagues of the air.
No witch may come nearer
Than pass down the lane,
A fugitive peerer,
An impotent bane;
No kirtle of devil
May dip from the night,
Our lintel with evil
To brush in its flight.
Here melody lives,
The spirit burns purely,
And what the year gives
We harvest securely.
Still shall the blue witch-ball
Hang from the parlour-beam,
Catching the garden gleam
Globed from the window pane,
Marking our steps again
As in the room they fall;
A far little world of dream,
Still it shall hang by day,
Still it shall hang by night,
Just for the eye's delight,

Just as a story told,
Just as a fear of old
Gathered away;
And never shall haunted
Breath cloud in the glass
The little enchanted
Long alleys of grass,
And birds of sweet lustres,
And gathering bees,
And blossoms in clustres,
And orcharded trees,
All mirrored in flame
From our acre of light
Where the witch never came
From fogs of the night.

JOHN DRINKWATER.

THE wind's robe rustles on the sand,
The cloudy hosts do run like sheep;
The wind is west and far inland—
They pray to God their souls to keep.

My soul has phases like the moon,
And like the moon it loves the sea.
And as the sea obeys the moon,
My soul obeys the dream of thee.

O woman that I never met,
O woman that I shall not meet,
The beaches of the world are wet
With tears the half-moon findeth sweet.

What ails the sea that cries and cries?—
Why will she weep against the clouds?
The moon blown fainting from the skies,
Why will she wrap her face in shrouds?

RALPH CHEEVER DUNNING.

Flung by level moonlight grey against the wall,
I called my sulky shadow and my shadow heard the call.
Still the stars and patient trees petrified thereunder—
Stiller than a dead man's world dreaming of old thunder;
Still the night, and idle when I spoke that word,
Masterfully calling till my shadow heard.
Grey against the garden wall, like a lover trysting,
Glad to be evoked now in nowise resisting,
(Ah, the truth of magic, black and from the pit;
Love may not forestall nor wisdom fathom it!)—
Flat upon the moonlit wall there it shook and waited
Till a word should mould it to what form was fated.

Then it was I called myself, called me by my name—
Lo, my shadow started like a restless flame;
Started, stood forth like a bas-relief emergent,
Bulked into a statue, a body swift and urgent,
Came and stood beside me and brushed the roadside grass,
While I shook and waited till the dream should pass.

"Friend," it said, "I came at call, tell me of thy trouble."

"Foe," I said, "I curse thee and the fate that made
me double."
Then I looked into its eyes, but could not look for
long.

"Why wilt thou deny me now, and do me wrong?—
Wilt thou deny me thrice, O Judas?" said he,
weeping.
"Sowed I not the good seed that ye might have
the reaping?
Have ye had joy of women, or kissed delighted
girls?
I lured their lips unto thee, 'twas I procured their
curls.
All dreams of dark delight that ever lacked ful-
filling—
Thine was the fault in this, I struggled and was
willing.
Would women ever listen, or thou have heart to
ask?
Did they not look behind thee when I used thee for
a mask?"

Then said I to my shadow: "I beg thy princely
pardon,
My better self, or devil out of the primal garden;
Now which shall be the shadow upon the wall at
rest?"

"Oh, thou shalt be the shadow and this will be the
test:

When as we move to moonward it is thou shalt
follow.
Come now," he said, "we go to prove the old moon
hollow."

And sure enough—my shadow, 'twas he that did pre-
vail;
And 'tis I, my lusty shadow, that now tells this
tale.

RALPH CHEEVER DUNNING.

TURNING THE CHEEK

Life, Lady of whims,
Hurled stones at me.
I gathered them—
Patiently—
I soaked them long within my blood,
I rounded the sharp, uneven points,
And polished and planed them
With palms that ached and trembled,
Until they dazzled and soothed
Like setting suns. . . .
I placed them in a perfect circle
Upon a platter of heavy gold,
And, bowing,
Humbly
In the dust,
Returned them, praying,—
"Madam, accept these giant rubies
For your diadem."

Paul Eldridge.

THE HOLLOW MEN

A penny for the Old Guy

We are the hollow men
We are the stuffed men
Leaning together
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!
Our dried voices, when
We whisper together
Are quiet and meaningless
As wind in dry grass
Or rats' feet over broken glass
In our dry cellar

Shape without form, shade without colour,
Paralyzed force, gesture without motion

Those who have crossed
With direct eyes, to death's other kingdom
Remember us—if at all—not as lost
Violent souls, but only
As the hollow men
The stuffed men.

T. S. Eliot.

BEAUTY

Her way above our knowledge is a cloud's;
Her bright horizons bend not to condone
Frontiers revealed by poets or by crowds;
She goes not secretly, yet goes alone.
Her way against our passion is a breath
Blown down at midnight from the earth's dark eaves,
Melodious of stars and edged with death
To rouse strange tumults among fading leaves.
And one who knows her is expressed like her
In eloquent evasions, sharing through
Time's deep transparency the song and stir
Of vernal dawns her summer answers to;
And turning thence toward men such desperate eyes
As young Christ wears for pity when He dies.

William Foster Elliot.

BLACK MAN

WHILE you lie there on your bunk in the white-
washed shack, Black Man,
What are you thinking of, flat on your back?
Of your part white soul, or the part that's black?
Are you asleep? You moan so! Come back to
life, Black Man.

Are your eyes open? What horror haunts you
now, Black Man?
You sweat and twitch and mumble; your hands
mow
When the tree-trunks rub a scraping bough,
And the wind comes through the floor cracks—
sough-h-h—What do you hear,
Black Man?

"Oh I hears de water slidin—*slippin long, slippin
long*—
And de trees is black an glidin—*slippin long, slip-
pin long*—

Dere's er voodoo man in er white skull-face,
An him and de river's er havin er race—
Slippin long, slippin long.
I'm in de river; I'm er big black snake
Wid my head under water—lemme breave, God's
sake!
Slippin long, slippin long.

De voodoo man's got er rattle an er gun,
An he runs faster'n ayre water kin run.
O God, O God, hep dat snake to swim!
What dat voodoo man er wantin wid him?
Dat's me! I'm dat snake er swimmin under water!
Dat white-face's hands is bloody for de slaughter——
Slippin long, slippin long.

Heah! Dis aint no river—dis er swamp I'm in—
I hear's blood-hounds er howlin, smellin out sin!
Done loss my feet—I'm sinkin down, I'm sinkin!
Ooze ain't got no bottom—soft and stinkin—
What I done done, Lord? What I done done?
Hep me, Lord, hep yo poh stumblin son—
Sinkin down, sinkin down.

Caint git bref heah, breavin mud,
Drownin—aint no water—mud!
Dem dog's teeth! Goner—heah's de fire-pile—
All dese white folks—Y' all don mean it? Smile.
White folks, caint you smile? Aint done er thing,
Jes slippin down de river-road, down to de spring,
Slippin long, slippin long. . . .

O God! de fire's blazin, dese white men's dancin
Roun and roun it, shoutin and prancin,
Shootin off guns and cussin and swearin,
Hosses hitched yonder is scairt an rarin

Wid dey eye-balls white, and red in de light,
Er snortin and plungin—dey's crazy from fright!
Rarin round, rarin round. . . .
O God! dey's coming fer me wid er blazin bran!
Lord don let'm burn him—burn dat poh black man?"

Why do you twist your arms so? What do your feet spurn, Black Man?
Are you in hell now? Do your burn?
You writhe and sweat, and tumble and turn
Like a noon-day worm, and your lips churn such froth, Black Man!

Now you lie still—not a quiver nor twitch—Are you dead, Black Man?
Your nostrils take the breath's return
Steadily and slow; your dry mouth's yearn
Slavers the mumbling lips. How did you learn such peace, Black Man?

"Yassuh, dat's me in dat Chariot of Fire—*rollin long, rollin long.*
Dese angels takin me up, higher and higher—*rollin long, rollin long.*

Dere's de Devil down dere, fixin folks terms:
Dem white folks' squirmin, wrigglin lak worms—*Rollin long, rollin long.*

Trine git smaller'n nothin, trine crawl in de
groun,
Er weepin an er wailin out de Moner's soun—
Rollin long, rollin long.

I'm er floatin, I got wings, too, white wings—
higher!
Er mountin up to Jesus, while de worl's all er fire.
I sees Judgment Day er comin, Good Lord, Good
God!
Dere's er Great Day er comin, O Lord, O God!
Dis Black man's yo servant—comin long, O
Lord—
In er Chariot of Fire—comin long, O Lord!
Comin long . . . Comin long. . . .

WILLIAM YANDELL ELLIOTT.

VALENTINE TO ONE'S WIFE

Hearts and darts and maids and men,
  Vows and valentines, are here;
Will you give yourself again,
  Love me for another year?

They who give themselves forever,
  All contingencies to cover,
Know but once the kind and clever
  Strategies of loved and lover.

Rather let the year renew
  Rituals of happiness;
When the season comes to woo,
  Let me ask, and you say yes.

Love me for another year!
  Here is heaven enough to climb,
If we measure, now and here,
  Each delicious step of time.

John Erskine.

TO A YOUNG SON

For me the feet of time stood still
Beside the place you lay with death.
My future fell asleep and will
Only awake if wakes your breath.

Should not the shadow creep away
After the crimson blossom goes,
A blot prostrate upon the day
Under the stem that held the rose?

Sara Bard Field.

TO COLUMBUS

I

THESE were the seas that you knew, and these were the ways that you followed
In your Genoa of the dark narrow streets, where the sails flapped against the fronts of the houses;
The wave of the Mediterranean, evenly spaced, foamless wave ever advancing and never returning,
This was the power that lured you on, and perhaps also the tale of some yellow-shawled Arab sailor;
Whose dark brown sunken eyes burned strangely at you, kindling with sullen fire,
Within his hawklike, hungry face, weathered by tropic tempests.
He spoke to you of Cathay and the way thither, from the ports that open on the Red Desert,
Of Travancore and of Ind, of Taprobane and of the Valley of Spices.
And your eyes were taken away from him as he spoke, they went seeking the far-off horizon
Taut as the string of a violoncello played upon by the light; above it opal-fired clouds were far-gathered,
Piled high like the mountain-tops of dark islands waiting for an eternal conquest.

This was the land that you loved, that you left,
that you did not see again:
The land of the grey-green olive climbing the hills
in high terraces, of the black cypresses following
in procession like monks in cowls, of the
umbrella-pines soaring to the tops of the
mountains.
You left it for a harsher land, for Spain of the
Kings, sun-burnt, grey, desolate, a land where
for seven hundred years the sun-flame of the
Cross had struggled with the soft moony
splendours of Islam.
You left it for the opening to the unknown ocean
where pink Jebel el Tarif glares at Africa
opposite, couchant and yellow and sullen,
You left it for the purple-green Gulf Stream breaking
about you in foam, for naked brown
Indian girls strolling amid palms, for solitude,
glory, and silence.

II

When you had abandoned the land's last horizon,
When you floated to tropic waters,
When the wave took you not knowing whither you
would go, when the wind in your white sails
was silent,
And you abode in the midst of the seas
Like a swimming fish floating at the centre of a
great nacreous shell dyed with all colours,

Then to you, pacing the tiny deck of your caravel,
each distant cloud grew a portent,
Each floating weed promised an island,
Each shifting sea breeze came laden with perfume
of flowers and spices,
And the sea turtles swimming about you through
the blue depths below raised ever your hope
for a landfall.

The birds flew hither and thither,
The yards on the tall masts were righted,
The breeze failed and slackened, the sea ran like
a river, the wind was adverse,
The men greeted you with scowls or with smiles,
there was thunder in the air every morning,
Each day brought a new world closer.

You sailed outward from death to life and back to
death again a hundred times,
You trembled at the oncoming of darkness,
The sun shutting his gates of orange and rose be-
fore you with a clang as of breaking metal,
The men crossing themselves as the lantern was
hoisted to the maintop;
And each sunrise found you pacing the deck all
alone with pale face and sweat-darkened hair.

It was pride, pride of faith, that still there upbore
you,
Pride in your Genoa the superb, pride of a steel
blade tempered in Spanish fires of conquest;

You tore up the tottering cross and you bore it,
You the new Christopher, over the streams of the ocean,
In your pride exulting at the sufferings of the dying Man hanging upon it:
For in truth you were bearing the black sins of Europe to a land where no sin had yet been.

III

We who have struggled upon a longer, more desperate voyage,
Who have battled with tempests of the inner soul, and have felt our planks give way to the waves that attacked them,
Who have lifted up hands in mad mutiny against our very selves, who have covered the earth with dark slaughter,
Who have slain every blossoming hope, and poisoned the spring air with horror,
Who have fashioned ruins to take the place of men;
We who have struggled onward and on
Dreaming of a hope beyond human hope, of a knowledge beyond human knowledge,
Of a desire beyond human desire,
When the temptation of the serpent shall be no more bitter, nor the deed of shame done in the darkness,
In the days when man shall hold the sun like a naked child close in his arms, and woman stand laughing beside him:

When awakening in the morning they shall be made one, nor conceal with cold darkness and horror
The desire of their souls' awakening through flesh, desire to attain the last heaven;
Where there shall be naught that they shrink from, naught that they dare not courageously and fully achieve here,
Twain made one in themselves, and through themselves outward for others;
When the desire and despair of man shall be crowned with immortal white glory,
And there shall be neither time nor sorrow nor death;
We know that on a great day to come you will rise again as a red star beckoning us on.

New worlds yet unconquered waken each day within us,
Youth cannot fully conquer, nor old age fully conquer,
We shall abandon our works to the passing of years, to the wave's teeth and the wind's cry,
Setting forth with full sail for an ocean unseen, burning with zeal to achieve it:
Youth is the season for planning and dreaming, for hoping and praying, for seeking:
Still to come is the season for achieving all that we have to achieve and for passing beyond.

We from the seas that you found, and the ways
that you wandered,
From clamorous and sullen streets where the spirit
is stifled and vanquished,
From cities of shame and of greed, from energies
shattered and wasted,
From the land where the wheels of death grind
without cease and man is the mad slave that
feeds them;
From a flat barren shore where the wave in mad
tides rushes up the grey land to devour it,
Come to the quiet bays that you lost, to the soft
swelling olive-grey hillsides,
Where the Cross for centuries after your death has
hung bearing its burden of sorrow,
And we bring with us the old seed ripened to a
fruit, the proud will grown bitter and silent,
The suffering become a garment, and the glory
grown a dark weapon;
Scarified through defeat we come hither and we
stand before you now silent.
You who once guided us westward, here on this
eastward shore will now look down and under-
stand.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER.

We saw the Earth
Drained of her summer, yet not turned to autumn,
And she was like a human mother, one
Dressing her children for some dance,
And half they wear the daily dress
And half the festal colours,
Red ribbon or golden scarf,
And this she tries and that,
And ponders which most beautifully becomes
All that young beauty. Soon they will be dressed
In a full splendour for that full delight,
After to lay them down
In an abandoned weariness,
Tired and pale in the pale sheets,
And slumber till night gives them back
All rosed to rosy dawn.
So Earth above her trees
Touched here with lemon, there with a crimson
fire,
Yearned like a careful human mother, she
More rapt, more careful and more mother-souled.

Robin Flower.

I SLEPT awhile, then woke. The night was wild
With the high East Wind's howling—a black hound
That snarled, and rattled at the casement latch,
And shook dry mortars down the twisted flue.
Hound answered hound and both together lifted
Harsh angry notes, and sadder notes that filled
The hapless ear with fright.
I slept and waked at whiles, all hours, and heard
The howling though I slept.
At last, asleep or waking, all was hushed
And from the hush and dark—

Childish familiar images, ghosts of the nights
Of childish loneliness, wonders and fears,
Terrors that drummed my heart then echoing now
The aching drumming. Whose was that figure, tall,
Gray and still as a juniper at twilight?
Lot's wife, Pillar of Salt, with blind face towards
Sodom and Gomorrah smouldering in the Plain.
Turn, turn, hoar frozen Pillar, turn yet thine eyes!
Smouldering and guttering in the Plain they lie,
A sullen bubble of fire, Sodom and Gomorrah,
Abhorred and obscure names yet in my ears,
As in my sight the sullen fiery worms
That wrapped them strangling round . . . *Turn, turn thine eyes!*
And yet she stood, and stands, hoar Pillar of Salt.

And now two figures climbed Moriah's steep,
A young lad bearing wood; and an old man fire,
With a bright knife at his thigh, who mournfully
Upon the topmost mound heaved a new mound,
With shaking purpled hands and eyes that filled.
He laid the wood there, bound
And laid the startled boy there, and uplifted
The knife—already bloody in my eyes
Ere plunged—until a Voice shook from above,
A dreadful Eye hung in the middle of heaven
Pouring sharp rays upon the tawny Mount.
O dreadful Eye, pursuing sleep and dreams
And waking thought,
From cloudless azure casting golden arrows
Into every hole and noisome nook of fear,
Fire-lidded Eye, fire-brow'd. 'Twas not the Voice,
It was the Eye that sank Abraham down
With another horror than the sacrifice,
And Isaac prone upon the waiting pyre
Burned by that Eye of fire.

Whose that tall shape and shining sallow front,
Beaked nose, black brush-like hair and hawk-like
eyes,
Lean callous figure by the river's waste
Or desert waste casting his shadow on
Myriad slaves? And what the dreadful cloud,
Darkening and humming death, infinite hordes,
Dusking Imperial Egypt's self with fear?
Horde after horde, hosts of that angered God

Whose smoky fire burned through the locust rivers,
These like another fire ate substance up
And left white famine in a desert of bones.
Saw Pharaoh this dark cloud, and snuffed that fire
Of famine?
—Now Elijah's ravens
Flying to the brook to drink, beheld him prone,
And dropped, as grim Jehovah bade, foul meats
For the sad prophet's need,
Who in the loneliness of loneliness
Raised fleshless arms to plead
For death, or the Lord's judgment on his foes.
The ravens dropping offal, craking death,
Black missive wings between starved earth and hell,
Black wings that rose,
Circled and fell—

Gave place and rose no more.
Jordan's pale shallow stream it was and on the shore
Tumult of wondering tongues; no ravens now,
A dove between John and Jesus fluttering,
Neck-ringed with black, and nimbus'd with pale flame,
And tipt with sapphire flame the light-like wing,
And treading fire when o'er the twain she hung
Between the fierce face and the patient brow
Of John and Jesus as they stood and parted.
—And then the raven wings, and notes
Returned of desert throats.

Maybe the wind was slaked awhile and slept,
Or I slept though it raved; but as I turned
The vixen East barked out anew and brought
Voices again that muttered in childish sleep
When sleep was innocent.
Beneath a white Tower lay the tissued corpse
Yet gleaming and yet warm with cunning blood.
The city curs crept out and smelt the blood
Oozing upon the supple golden tissue,
Less supple than the breast and thighs beneath.
Their yelping called new yelping and the dogs
Of that dense kennel sprang and wrangled together,
Their muzzles bloodied with the Queen's warm veins,
While others stood and snarled, "Behold the Queen,"
And one leaned evil from the Tower and snarled,
"So ends Queen Jezebel, blessed be the Lord!"
His sharp teeth gleaming like the writhing curs'
That licked the blood and dust that late was hers.

The blood and dust. I saw the dust curl up
Chasing the bronz'd wheels of the car that drew
The corse of Hector soiled in the dust of Troy;
Moody Achilles frowning as he threw
His armour down like a discarded toy.

And there Prince Absalom, murdered yet beloved,
Hanging from the fatal tree,
His long hair caught amid the ravaged boughs

Of the sere festering wood,
And gray-winged shafts amid his careless breast,
Under the Judas tree.

And other ghosts I saw—
King David casting dust upon his head,
And Sheba's satraps decked on camel towers,
And weary Solomon, wise and cold,
Nodding on a throne of gold;
Cæsar's chill craft lined in his hueless smile,
Great-helmèd Antony clamouring on Egypt's sands
Beside the ageless Pyramids and old Nile . . .
Image with image self-confused confusing,
And in the wind's rage all old fears reviving,
Terrors that startled childhood, quick and numbing,
Again, the haunting drumming;
And O, again, as once, again thy breast,
Mother, that rocked my heart to rest;
Though when I woke and knew that not again
Thy breast would still me, sharper yet my pain.

JOHN FREEMAN.

STREETS OF SAN FRANCISCO

Market Street

Is like unto a leader of many men
Upon whom so many men depend—
Yet unable to understand
That without his subordinates
His being would have no value.

Pacific Avenue

Starting out in life
In poverty of body
And rising over hills
To a poverty of mind.

Yossef Gaer.

THE ANNIVERSARY

THE clicking of the latch,
Then the scratch
Of a match
In the darkness and a sudden burst of flame—
And I saw you standing there
All astare
In the flare;
And I stepped to meet you, crying on your name.

But the match went out, alack!
And the black
Night came back
To my heart as I recalled with sudden fear
How upon your dying bed
You had said
That the dead
Return to haunt the faithless once a year.

WILFRID GIBSON.

NORTHUMBRIAN DUET

Ned Nixon and his Maggie

'Will you come with me, Maggie, to Stagshaw
Bank Fair?'
'Come with you where? Come with you where?
Do you fancy a lass has naught better to do
Than to go gallivanting, Ned Nixon, with you?'

'If you come with me, Maggie, I'll buy you a ring.'
'You'll do no such thing—you'll do no such thing.
Do you fancy I'd let my lad squander his pence
On tokens and trinkets and such like nonsense?'

'Come, Maggie, come, Maggie, we're only once
young!'
'Now hold your fool's tongue—now hold your
fool's tongue!
If we're only young once it behoves us to be
A common-sense couple and act cannily.'

'Time enough, Maggie, for sense when we're old.'
'Does copper turn gold? Does copper turn gold?
Or a guff turn wiseacre at threescore-and-ten?
Anyhow I'm for taking no chances with men.'

'Then must I go lonesome to Stagshaw Bank Fair?'
'What do I care? What do I care?
But if you go lonesome I'd have you to know
It's lonesome the rest of your life you will go.'

Wilfrid Gibson.

BROWN velvety bold eyes, smeared cheeks,
impertinent small nose, oddly provocative,
hair overdone, abundant, almost black,
mouth twisted, mouth intransigent,
a chin
that gave the lie direct to the other features—
a competent chaste chin.
Otherwise
an ordinary hooker: hat, blouse, skirt, shoes,
stockings, gloves, beads, bag,
each article expensive and not right,
her figure small and exquisitely wrongly
managed, loose
where it should have been articulate,
lolliping...
by no means undeveloped...

When she got in she crossed her legs
and pressed a tantalizing hoof against
my gas and emergency right ankle.
I made no plans, but thought I to myself,
BY GOD, YOU'LL WALK BACK THEN.

Sunset and evening star, a 1920
ford coupe. The noisy motor sang,
the trolley poles raced backward as we rattled on
under the viaduct and up the Dundee hill
and out upon the dirt roads where the cottages

are few and far between. And she
beside me, a small bundle of
unrealized energies of delight. She talked
incessantly of nothing in a tone
of strained enthusiasm
very depressing.
I was mute. Her resolute bold attitude
of utter willingness daunted me terribly.
The horrible inhuman lack of friendliness
in her brown eyes daunted me terribly.
How do we get that way?

She snuggled cozily. She smelled—
her brand of talcum smelled all right.
She should have been attractive. Everything
was there including time and place. Besides,
I had been looking for a woman for
the past few weeks.

Why don't you say something?
Why do you look at me that way?
My face ain't dirty, is it?

We had
drawn up beside the road some seven miles out.
I was expected to say something nice.
She expected to make the usual returns
and . . . God, what a fizzle!

What is the matter with you, anyway?
What did you bring me out here for, if you

don't want to talk to me? For half
a cent I'd get out of this bus and beat
it back alone.
That made me think of what I thought at first,
BY GOD, YOU'LL WALK BACK THEN.

The immeasurable young night closed in
upon us as we sat watching the stars.
Men are odd creatures. Women have to wait.
It's always been that way.
She snuggled closer. One must treat a nut
According to the nut psychology.
Yet one should have a handle after all—
something to work on.

She flared up again.
What is it you don't like in me, she said,
I don't pretend to be much but I've got
Feelings, she said. I'm alive, she said.

I answered, Hush.
That is the trouble, you're alive.
I had a premonition that you were,
and now you say you are. I couldn't possibly
touch a live woman.
I should be scared to death.

What is the matter with you anyway?
Are you bughouse?

You know. You know.
I don't. I don't.

If you are trying to be funny?

Live people can't do such things. You know that.

I know if you are going to talk that way
I'll get right out and hoof it back to town.

Thoroughly frightened she began to fumble
at the car door catch.

Wait, honey, we are going to have a talk.
I shan't disturb a hair of your bright head.

Good Lord, you are particular, she said.

Listen. There's something intervenes,
There's something that won't let us act that way.
I don't know what it is . . . something alive
in you, something in me . . .
It will not let us do such things.

I think you're crazy,
You don't have to like me, understand?
But there's no need to rub it in.
Supposing I like you . . .

It isn't that.
It's just the opposite of that.
I love you . . . that damn chin of yours . . .
something about it . . . suddenly I saw

you were a poor good human creature like
myself . . . needing nothing but sympathy . . .
That is the thing that came alive in me
so suddenly. Love is the thing
That came alive so suddenly in you.

I'm going to get right out.
No gentleman can talk that way to me
and get away with it. I'm a slob.
I know it. I'm a slob, but I've got feelings.
I don't mind
a little fun, you understand, but you
would strip the last thread from a woman's soul.
You mustn't do it.
I won't let you do it.

My dear, it can't be helped. The thing is done.
Something has butted in and spoiled our game.
We meant to be quite practical, im-
personal, sketching the edges of
desire, secure in an agreeable
moral remoteness, when suddenly . . . we merged!
I wouldn't touch your body for the world.
I should be scared to death.

She said, and her voice trembled when she said,
Don't worry about that. Wait till you're asked,
she said and then, You'd better start your engine,
Mister Man. Which made me think
of what I'd thought of twice before,
BY GOD, YOU'LL WALK BACK THEN.

Listen.
I feel as bad as you do over this.
You see the fix we're in—
awkward for me, impossible for you.

I've always tried to keep my self-respect,
the girl said. You don't leave me anything.

There were the stars. They didn't seem to help.
I had to grope it out alone. Listen, I said,
There are some things that any girl may do
with any man . . . they do not matter . . .
they are soon forgotten . . .
they are the unimportant moral things.
But there is something that she cannot do
with any man without uncovering
her soul to the last garment.
You've done that,
although you didn't mean to do it.
You've let me see something you thought was
covered.

Shut up, the girl said, haven't you any sense
of decency?

O what a darling girl! I cried. O what
poor innocent good souls we are!
That is what you and I were trying
to cover up. That is what all the world
is trying to cover up. How could we help
loving each other when we found out that?

The girl was laughing softly. Well, she said,
what are you going to do about it now?

That is the hell of it, I said. We can't go back
to where we started. That's impossible.
We know too much; we've seen too much for that.
And I can't pet you . . . I can't use you like
an ordinary . . . you're too close up . . . your
blood beats in my body, yet we never were
so far apart. Why should this have to happen?

She slid a shy hand into mine.
You are a nut, she said, and I'm a nut.
How did you know that was the way of it?
I'd rather be in this damn ford, she said,
with you in this damn ford than be in heaven.
No one, she said, not even God, she said,
has ever been as true to me before.
I'm what you said.
I'm better than you said.
I'm life itself and never can be wrong,
I'm the undying singer and the song,
I'm the slow wind that blows along the wheat,
I'm the swift water running clean and sweet,
I'm the brown earth from whom we all arose,
I'm the bright skies that all about us close,
I'm hunger and the wine-cup and the bread,
I'm the one consolation left the dead.

She flung her hands out wildly . . .
grabbed at her breast . . .

tore at her flimsy waist . . .
What did you think?
This body here, this painted casual flesh,
bathed and adorned for casual bridegrooms,
was me . . . me! You're the first man
who ever saw, or ever tried to see . . . *that.*
The others don't want much . . . they don't get
much . . .
they're entirely welcome.
You were a fool. You wanted
everything and got . . . nothing. She laughed
harshly.
Christ, let's go back. This is getting
monotonous.

We rode back rather quietly,
at one with one another and the night.
I left her at the lunch counter. She said
I'll see you sometime later
sometime when you don't
feel like you do tonight.

Maybe, I said, if there's a crowd, maybe.

WARREN GILBERT

FLORIZEL IN LOVE

(*A Scenario*)

The day ends
Like any other
Apparently
Night lulls
The inferior antic
The cage sleeps
Except Florizel

Florizel wakes
He loves
She is not of the cage

What a cage
He is weary of it
Is there no way out
If only the god at feeding time
Should forget to padlock

A paw reaches through the wire
The padlock is not there

Thou hast only to give a push Florizel

The door opens
But not wide

Fling thyself against it

It swings wide open

Florizel hesitates
Glances about
And pulls the door shut again

At this moment
The moon
Rises above a cocoanut
The tree in which he has seen her playing
Where her nest is surely

She who is sweeter than any nut
And extraordinarily mauve

Bursting open the door he jumps

Runs
Trips
Rises
Runs on
Bumps into a tree
Which is not a cocoanut

At last he finds it
And there is a nest too
It is her nest at the top

Already he has drawn her to him
With his arms and tail

Then he clasps the foot of the tree
Clambers up to the nest

A ray of the moon lights it
Two are in it
Asleep
Tail in tail

Poor Florizel
It is she
She loves another
She is perhaps married
Thou wast happier in thy cage

Yet how beautiful she is

Listen
I love thee
We will yet be happy together
And he approaches his face for a kiss

It jerks back with a scream
She has bitten his ear

Nevertheless
She loves thee a little Florizel
She bites thee on the ear

He holds on with one paw
And feels for his ear with the other

Meanwhile
The companion of her nest
Rouses
Picking a cocoanut
He deals it from above his head

Florizel relaxes
Drops

Midway
He grasps at a twig

Wakes
In his corner
Scratching himself

It is already light
The cage stirs

That door
It was never open

LOUIS GILMORE.

By pointing to that golden bird
  You mock me laughing, There your are!
But I see in him, bravely reared
  Above the pebbled tower and square,
A guard against the lightning's stroke,
A sign to bring the church good luck.

Point him again! I would become
  The bird which you point out to mock,
With long brown tendons on your thumb,
  I would become the weathercock:
Neither inconstant nor unkind
Were I the cock and you the wind.

For I would in those fields of air
  Love you as in these fields of grass,
And meet your moods and seem to veer,
  Swinging around to let you pass;
Until the verger at the vane
Would look and say, There will be rain.

O what a mascot I should make
  For lovers as the eve advances;
Wishing the sun down for their sake
  Whose shadows run to leap the fences;
Watching the big star bless their hour,
Lonely in light above the tower!

But would you have the heart to leave
  Me long there in suspense, above
The little garden of the grave
  To gaze on other lovers' love:
To be forever left in the lurch
While wedding parties entered church?

The Church to which Love hopes to urge
  You doubting where his lamp is fixed,
The Church to which the paths converge,
  The Church where NOW and THEN are mixed,
The Church which gathers things divine
And tops them with its lucky sign.

OLIVER ST. JOHN GOGARTY.

FOR ONE WHO WILL REMEMBER

Drop the little glass heart on a stone,
Break the body, bone by bone.

Tatter the flesh, till torn to dust
It heeds again the primal lust

And is composed once more in flesh
Of a new manner and foreign mesh . . . .

Where will you be, thus dispossessed
Of what was you, grieving, distressed

Memory should have no body or breath
To shelter it? Some call this death;

But to remember, yet no more be,
This seems a stranger tragedy.

Laura Riding Gottschalk.

SUMMARY FOR ALASTOR

Because my song was bold
And you knew but my song,
You thought it must belong
To one brave to behold.

But finding me a shy
And cool and quiet Eve,
You scarcely would believe
The fevered singer was I.

And you caressed the child
That blushed beneath your eyes,
Hoping you might surprise
The hidden heart and wild.

And being only human,
A proud, impetuous fool
Whose guise alone was cool,
I let you see the woman.

Yet, though I was beguiled
Through being all too human,
I'm glad you had the woman
And not the trustful child.

For though the woman's weeping
And still must weep awhile,
The dreaming child can smile
And keep on safely sleeping.

Laura Riding Gottschalk.

FROM OUR GHOSTLY ENEMY

The fire was already white ash
When the lamp went out
And the clock at that signal stopped:
The man in the chair held his breath
As if Death were about.

The Moon shone bright as a lily
On his books outspread.
He could read in that lily light:
"When you have endured your fill,
Kill!" the book read.

The print being small for his eyes,
To ease their strain
A hasty candle he lit,
Keeping the page with his thumb.
"Come, those words again!"

But the book he held in his hand
And the page he held
Spelt prayers for the sick and needy.
"By God, they are wanted here,"
With fear his heart swelled.

"I know of an attic ghost,
Of a cellar ghost,
And of one that stalks in the meadows
But here's the spirit I dread,"
He said, "the most.

"Who without voice or body
Distresses me much,
Twists the ill to holy, holy to ill,
Confuses me, out of reach
Of speech or touch.

"Who works by moon or by noon,
Threatening my life.
I am sick and needy indeed."
He went then filled with despair
Upstairs to his wife.

He told her these things, adding
"This morning alone
Writing, I felt for a match-box:
It rose up into my hand
Understand, on its own.

"In the garden yesterday
As I walked by the beds,
With the tail of my eye I caught
'Death within twelve hours'
Written in flowers' heads."

She answered him, simple advice
But new, he thought, and true.
'Husband, of this be sure
That whom you fear the most
This ghost, fears you.

"Speak to the ghost and tell him
'Whoever you be,
Ghost, my anguish equals yours;
Let our cruelties therefore end.
Your friend let me be'."

He spoke, and the ghost, who knew not
How he plagued that man,
Ceased, and the lamp was lit again
And the dumb clock ticked again
And the reign of peace began.

ROBERT GRAVES.

THE PRESENCE

Why say Death? for Death's neither harsh nor kind:
Other pleasures or pains could hold the mind
If she were dead, for dead is gone indeed,
Lost beyond recovery and need,
Discarded, ended, rotten underground,
Of whom no personal feature could be found
To stand out from the soft blur evenly spread
On memory—if she were truly dead!

But living still, barred from accustomed use
Of body and dress and motion, in abuse
Of loving-kindness (for our anguish, too,
Denies we love her as we swear we do)
She fills the house and garden terribly
With her bewilderment, accusingly
Enforcing her too sharp identity,
Till every stone and flower, bottle and book,
Cries out her name, pierces us with her look:
"You are deaf, hear me!
You are blind, see me!"
How deaf or blind
When horror unrelieved maddens the mind
With those same pangs that lately choked her breath
And changed her substance, but have brought no death?

Robert Graves.

A TRAMP FINDS HIMSELF INSPECTED BY AN OWL

THESE things are youth's, old owl; these things I hate.
The constant dreams that change and interchange,
Taking the whole world in a little range,
Yet creeping up to bed when it grows late;
And short-lived loves that yet are over strong,
Making the whole mind one old weary faction,
Fearful of peace, more fearful still of action,
Fighting beneath no banner, with no song.

But age is like a wreck upon the bay;
The sails are down: they do not feel the wind;
There comes no whisper from a foolish Spain;
The wheel is broken: there's no course to lay.
Only the sunlight, like a fish gold finned,
Gleams through the water, laughs, is gone again.

H. GRAHAM GREENE.

NIGHT

No one has seen the beauty of the night.
Many have stood under the moon and gone
Through lovely fogs of dusk until the dawn,
Always with blindness folded on their sight.
Many have worshiped there; many have poured
Their being out like water into sands;
Many have lifted timid lover hands,
And none has seen or known what is adored.

The monstrous beauty that is darkness blows
About them in a vapor; like linked steel
It fastens on their languid tread; they feel
Nearness of unimaginable repose
That is no more than a shadow at the heel,
Until there falls the darkness no moon knows.

HAZEL HALL.

TRAVEL-PIECE

I HAVE seen lightning walking upon the water,
While thunder shook my head like a sieve of corn:
I have felt cold-handed Winter touch me in the dark,
And Atlas-like have borne the burning weighty sun.

I have seen mountains and forests and beautiful cities
Growing empty as a deserted garden:
Mountains, and broken castles: desolate forests,
Where by a hundred paths
The singing Danube giddies through the plain:
I have felt by night its pulse on the boat's shell,
While fishes leapt like hoops in the dim light:
Seen sunrise delicately tread the uneven water.

Then for a while I sat in stranger places,
Dicing with Hunger to pass away the time;
I cut my fingers on the reins of State,
I knew the wicked eye of half-drawn steel
Outstare my own, and reached my hand for help
To my sole comrade, hidden-footed Fear.
So came at length to climb on alien hills,
Where pine trees sang like the fifty-fluted sea
And Snow let down her hair among the crocuses;
Where I saw men, upon that roof of the world,
Battle like cats, and utter their terrible notes.

I have walked with the sun shut into my tight head
And my hands jewelled with flies till my hands bled
At noon with bared feet in the hot sand,
The span-deep forest sand, where cedars stretch for ever,
And orchids suck weak breath over coloured swamp-water.
Where hot cicalas trill and bright bird never sings
I have seen the glassy wind warp in the hot sun:
The beautiful curved wind where the locusts tread:
Seen leaves of bushes like myriad green eyes,
And big butterflies like heavy voiceless birds.
And in mid-ocean I have seen green tigers
Endlessly burst through pale dense leaves of fog:
Deep in the under-parts of a ship have seen
Men, the innumerable nations of the world,
Like lights, dancing: looked in strange fleckt eyes.
I know the prick of turf, the scent of warm trees,
The taste of cheese, the sound of an old clock,
A fire of green ash logs in a stone house,
The lovely cooling touch of driven rain,
The perfect unrepeated shape of the Welsh hills
—But I have seen smooth familiar things
So thorny grow with criss-cross memories,
It pained to touch them.
Once, when a boy, I saw an old man die
So slowly scarce you knew which way the battle went
Till Pallor came on his cold horse
With certain rumour of defeat:

And the next day I saw men leap from life
Like salmon leap a weir.
At times, I have got drunk on brimming eyes;
Wrestled alone with him who comes by night,
And with a drop of scalding oil have lost him:
At times, fused night with day in fervent thinking
Till the skull sweated;
Or tumbled with rhythms on a pile of hay
For half a honey-suckled summer.

But all these things I don't mistake for living,
Nor bombast about them for creative writing,
—Romantics, largely spun from my own stomach,
Samples snipped from an enormous fabric:
Though greatly moving me—part of my substance.
Now, coming to manhood, I know I have plunged
no deeper
Into thought or doing than a kitten
Trying to dare to pat an electric fan.
And like that kitten, most I do is prompted
By uneasy twitchings in my tail's tip.
Surely it's now high time that something happened,
Something snapped somewhere, and I entered in;
—Ceased to be like the man who painted in the
dark,
Then called for a light to see what he had painted?

RICHARD HUGHES.

DREAM

He thought that he had buried her
So deeply, deeply underground
That her dead body would not stir
Nor her stopped mouth make fluttering sound.

And then he flourished like a tree,
New leaves of grace began to show,
And all his friends rejoiced that he
Could have, at last, his chance to grow.

But what they could not see or know
Was that the fiery sap which fed
His brilliant daily strength, would go
At night down to its old dark bed.

Thus, sensitive in sleep, he found
That on occasions he would feel
In that unconscious underground
A palpable, direct appeal.

In an environment that suits
A readjusted buried soul
She keeps on tugging at his roots
Like an unkind, aggressive mole.

Rolfe Humphries.

CLOUDY DROP

He played a clinging air for them,
  Along the road, across a string:
Men looked as deaf as they were dumb,
  And caused a wound to sing:

There's little food in melodies,
  There's much more to be found
By gulping ones and twos in threes
  Until your belly's round:

His longing didn't penetrate:
  His bow-string sped an arrow
That glanced off, whistled by: each pate
  Had grown too hard or narrow:

There's selfishness inside a house,
  There's greed in every street:
It boots a beggar, hide his mouse,
  And beat a soft retreat:

He stole away somewhere to brood,
  Nobody called out, Stop—
Except an inn that understood,
  Gathered and poured a drop.

Alfred Kreymborg.

BRIEF RETURN

He had so little of her, he who yet
Had always loved her—only life's arrears,
Only the months, never the longed-for years!
For from the promises his love had met
She had turned away, and their two roads were set
More widely separate than the hemispheres.
At last she came to him, freed of her tears,
Bringing the fruit of her too long regret.

See, he is walking to her mound today,
In the old graveyard, hushed and myrtle-aisled,
Where now for her the years are all the same.
Between the crowding slabs he makes his way,
Thoughtful, and leading by the hand a child
Who should have borne his features and his name.

Agnes Lee.

SILENUS

Silenus sat a little way
Apart from the unquiet play
Of goat-foot satyrs, and the throng
Of nymphs flushed red with wine. Their song
Seemed shrill against the silence of the trees . . .
He was quite sober, ill at ease,
Now weakly nursing discontent,
Now angered at his satyrs' merriment.

Three days before a herd had brought
Some skins of upland wine, and sought
To match them in a drinking-bout—
Ere half the wine was in, his luck was out;
But still the satyrs sat and drank
Till they, too, drenched their sleepy clay
And followed to oblivion
The fleering moon that rocked and sank,
And old Silenus was alone.
He, striving solemnly to sing
Forgotten catches, reeled away
Among the beeches, bravely hiccuping.

He had awakened, crapulous,
Beneath the staring noon, and flies
Were clustered in an angry fuss
Where wine had spilt about his beard
And hairy arms. He tried to rise,
And fell again; and someone jeered

At him. He saw a maid,
Her beauty in the hot green shade
Like silver or white ivory,
And, smiling foolishly,
He staggered to unsteady feet
And sought to catch her. Mocking him
She slipt among the trees with fleet
Elusive steps, and kept her slim
Young body from his eager hand,
Till fat Silenus, panting his defeat,
Had halted. He could not understand
Why she should run—they all were kind
To him, the forest nymphs, and she,
A mortal girl, could scarce be blind
To his divinity.

Again he sought her, slim and white,
Like ivory against the bright
Green silk of leaves, and tried to woo
Her with the wisdom he had found
In midnight forests, where the dew
Hung heavy, and the moon lay drowned
In quiet pools; but he was stale
With wine, and blabbed a maudlin tale.
Her laughter made him querulous
And boast about his triumphs, how
He slew the giant Enceladus,
And rode the golden East, his brow
With ivy bound, and underfoot
A path of endless flowers flung low

Before the singing magic of his flute.
The girl still mocked him, heartlessly;
She only saw an old fat man
Whose most ungodlike belly shook
With windy sighs. Then, weary, took
Her idle leave of him, and ran
Away on some new springtime quest,
Leaving the greenwood strangely unpossessed . . .

So old Silenus sat apart
From all his satyrs, stubbornly
Forsaking wine to fill his heart
With sick remembrance.
His throat grew dry;
A wine-skin, gurgling, fell to earth.
He moved uneasily. The mirth
Of nymphs and satyrs seemed to wake
The echoes sleeping in the wine
To laugh at fools who peak and pine,
And sniff their tears, when they can slake
An honest thirst in honest drink . . .

The girl was mortal, anyhow,
And beauty dies; her breasts will sink
To heavy shapelessness, her brow
Grow wrinkled, and her laughter shrill,
But wine! ah, wine is wine until
It runs along the veins, and then
'Tis fire and laughter—gods grow men
And men flush red to feel divine,

And—"Wine, you topers, give me wine!"
He cries, and all the roaring crew
Bring wine and laughter, hailing him
With shouts and tumbled wreaths of flowers,
And drink and drown the day's last hours
Till darkness comes, and pale stars swim
On their deep seas of midnight blue.

But when the moon rode clear and high,
She saw, not very far from there,
A girl who slept. She was as fair
As silver or white ivory,
And in her sleep she mocked mortality.

E. R. R. Linklater.

"Why, Sallie Williams,
I'm proper glad to see ye.
Go straight in t' th' clock-room,
I blazed a fire in ther' this afternoon to take the chill off
An' it's nice an' warm.
Now you set right down in the red plush rocker
An' git your breath,
You look all beat out.
Just you set still an' rest
An' I'll run out t' th' kitchen
An' git ye a good strong cup o' tea an' some cookies.
I won't be a minute."

"You're real good, Lidy,
But I don't hold with snacks between meals,
Never did, an' I don't dar'st begin now.
The tea'll be enough an' plenty.
I been a long walk
An' I do feel a mite tired."

"I'll leave the door open
So's we can talk through.
It's been some consid'able time since you was here,
All of two months, I do b'lieve.
I was goin' to git Oren to drive me into town
For a visit with you one o' these days.

However did you happen out here?
On foot too.
We ain't so young as we was, you an' me."

"We ain't, Lidy, that's a fact,
Though I keep pretty spry, consid'rin'."

"It's awful ugly footin' this time o' year,
The roads ain't dry yet.
A couple more weeks should harden 'em.
Now you just drink that,
I made it fire-strong a-purpose,
As Father used to say."

"It's real revivin',
I feel better a'ready."

"To think o' your trapesin' way out here,
An' in your best magenta silk too.
I must say I take it very kind.
But 'pears like we be gittin' strangers
When you have to dress up for me."

"To tell the truth, Lidy,
You ain't just the reason I put on this dress.
I had another,
But I'm most afraid to tell it."

"Don't you be silly, an' le' me take your cup.
This ain't no time o' day to be keepin' things from me.

Wa'n't you the first I told
When I brought my mind to marry Oren,
An' ain't I been sharin' my troubles with ye ever since!
You got somethin' on your mind, Sallie,
I thought as much when you first come in.
Now you tell me right out what 'tis.
We're old to be hangin' back with one another
An' I'm bound to git it sooner or later.
If you didn't come out a-purpose to see me
What did you come for?
There ain't nobody else to visit out this way
As I'm aware."

"There's a lot o' folks, Lidy,
Only they're dead.
You're forgittin' the buryin'-ground."

"Sakes alive! What be you a-doin' to the buryin'-ground?
I didn't know you ever went near it
'Cep' on Decoration Day."

"I never did before.
I wanted to see Miss Ziba's grave."

"Miss Ziba's grave!
Well, you do take me all aback.
I al'ays thought you hated her."

"Hate ain't no word for the way I felt 'bout that
woman.
That's why I wanted to see her grave."

"I don't sense your meanin', Sallie.
You'd best begin right at the beginnin'
An' tell me straight through."

"I guess I'll have to.
It's preyin' on me somethin' awful.
What's done's done, an' I'm glad,
But I'm kind o' scared too.
Well, you take me all aback.
Lidy, you promise you won't tell a soul,
Not even Oren."

"I won't, if it'll ease you. There!
Now you git it right out, dear,
I'm listenin'."
"You mind the trouble, Lidy?"

"Don't I? Why even us girls was all sides 'bout it.
I've never had nothin' to do with Hannah Williams
Nor Addie Belle Dyer since."

"Well, that trouble sp'iled my life.
I never telled you how it laid on me.
I couldn't bring myself to speak on't even to you.
But it's been a dwellin' horror all my life,
Like a ghost-story,

Only 'twas I was ha'nted, not a house.
It begun when I was goin' on for ten year old.
Miss Ziba'd al'ays been friendly with my folks,
I used to call her Aunt Ziba.
She made lovely paper-dolls;
Many's the Sat'day afternoon I spent over to her house
Playin' with 'em,
An' an old doll's-house she had when she was a little girl.
Then all at once it come, the quarrel.
Mother telled me I wa'n't never to go to Miss Ziba's agin.
I mind how she looked when she said it,
Not like Mother at all, but a stranger.
That look chilled me clear to the marrer,
I git the shivers now, thinkin' of it.
'Twas as if Mother was hid away an' some one else'd took her place,
I ain't never had a shock to beat that,
So lonely as 'twas, an' never been nothin' else since, not once.
I ran away up garret an' cried all afternoon.
I don't run now,
Habit keeps folks quieter if that's all it does.
One day I met Miss Ziba out walkin'
An' she stared right through me as if I wa'n't ther'.
That made me feel creepy
As though I wa'n't ther' myself.
O' course in a village like ours

You can't help meetin's,
But I never got used to Miss Ziba actin's though she could put her foot right down on me
An' feel the boards under, just the same.
I used to look in t' th' windows o' Mr. Gale's shop
To see if I could see myself in 'em
After she'd gone by.
Then the girls begun.
Addie Belle took a notion to stick her tongue out at me
Whenever Miss Price' back was turned.
She'd do it a dozen times a forenoon.
An' then she an' Hannah Williams'd h'ist up their desk tops, an' whisper an' giggle behind 'em
Till Miss Price ketched 'em at it.
Tricky wa'n't the word for them two.
Hannah'd say she wanted a drink an' ast to go out to th' well;
She had to pass me to git to th' door,
An' goin' an' comin' she'd give me a nasty pinch.
I'd ha' complained to Miss Price, only I dar'sn't,
Knowin' ther' was somethin' 'bout me,
Somethin' terrible, an' I couldn't guess what.
If it hadn't ha' been for you an' one or two o' the others
I think I'd ha' died for shame."

"Why, Sallie dear, you're tremblin'.
I hadn't no knowledge you took it so hard.
We wouldn't let Addie Belle or Hannah

See our poppy-shows, I remember.
You said they shouldn't see yours for a whole
packet o' pins.
I've laughed over it lots o' times since."

"I expect you thought my dander was up, Lidy,
An' it ought to ha' been.
But the peth was all gone out o' me,
I wanted to cry all the time,
An' I wouldn't ha' gone to school
Only Mother made me."

"What was it all about anyway?
I don't b'lieve I ever heerd."
"That's the awful part.
I don't know no more'n the dead.
I ast Mother once, but she wouldn't say a word,
An' the look she giv' me settled me not to ast agin,
'Twas like the first time only worse.
Mother an' me wa'n't never the same after.
I couldn't feel to love her like I should
With that secret in between."

"Sallie! You don't say!
An' you an' your Mother livin' alone together
twenty year;
It must ha' been all o' that."

"It was, twenty-three.
We lived together, but we didn't speak,

Not really speak, I mean.
I used myself for her hard as I could,
But that was all ther' was to it.
I've al'ays been good at flourishin' flowers
An' Mother liked a posy by her bed,
But them flowers was the nearest we come to speakin'.
I wa'n't no lonelier after she died
Than I was with her livin'.
Did I hate Miss Ziba, Lidy?
'Tis past expressin', I tell ye.
Wa'n't it her took my Mother away from me,
An' all the youth an' splendor I'd a right to?
Girls needs cossetin' all through the growin' years
But I didn't never have any,
An' I just lost heart for gay times an' junketin's.
I was a sort o' Ishmael to my own seemin'.
I read his story every night 'fore I went to bed one winter,
He got to be a kind o' blood cousin,
An' the thought of ther' bein' another of us comforted me some.
If it hadn't ha' been for you, Lidy—
But there, if it hadn't been so between us
I wouldn't be here now, tellin' ye.
Don't mind me, dear, tears is a help sometimes,
An' I feel dretful low-sperited."

"But what about the buryin'-ground, Sallie?"

"Yes, the buryin'-ground. I'm comin' to that.
When I heerd last Tuesday Miss Ziba was dyin'
It acted like a crust broke up in me somewheres,
I was so rej'iced 'twas like a jubilee.
I tried to pray aginst it,
But 'twa'n't no use.
I was as happy as though I'd heerd trumpetin' angels
Callin' me to dance before the ark,
The way they done in the Bible.
I couldn't go to the buryin', nat'rally,
But I watched it from the garret window
Windin' up along,
An' when I couldn't see it no more
I went an' got out this dress
An' pressed it nice an' tidy, an' put new lace to the neck an' sleeves.
Ther' was somethin' I had to do, Lidy.
You needn't feel obleeged to remark it none,
'Cause I had to do it.
I'd got to feelin' old scores must be paid,
An' I was goin' to pay 'em for keeps.
I waited a couple o' days
Till I 'lowed all the tendin' an' visitin'd be done
An' nothin' left to fix but the stone,
An' you couldn't expect that for some weeks;
Asa Frye makes real pleasin' stones, but he's slow.
When I got up this mornin' an' see what a day 'twas,

With the wind southerly and the snow-drops up an' noddin',
I know'd 'twas just time.
So I dressed me all up,
Same's I planned,
An' come right along up here to the buryin'-ground.
I can't go on, Lidy.
It's too dretful now.
Don't, don't let me go on.
Lidy, you mustn't let me go on,
I can't do it."

"There now, dearie, don't you fret.
You better tell it all out,
It's the holdin' in 's hurtin' ye.
What'd you do, Sallie?
I want to know complete."

"It's awful, Lidy,
A great deal more awful'n you'd think 'twould be.
I walked right up to Miss Ziba's grave an' kicked it.
The earth was all soft, o' course,
An' mounded up the way they al'ays leaves 'em.
I kicked that soft loam hard's ever I could,
An' I kep' kickin' till I made a big hole.
When I got through I felt as light as air,
All my hate was gone.
I was all full up with lovin' kindness.
Then I went to work an' filled up that hole with my bare hands

An' come right over to you.
Oh, Lidy, don't look at me like that!
I had to do it, an' I feel so happy,
So different from common,
Like there was wings on my feet
An' my eyes peerin' to a sunrise."

"But 'twas wicked, Sallie,
A wicked, wicked thing.
I don't see how you, a church member,
Could bring yourself to do such a thing."

"Neither do I.
Half of me's just as shocked as you be,
But the other half's so glad I could clap my hands."

"Don't, Sallie.
It ain't like you.
'Tis a very wrong thing to meddle with a grave.
Oh, whatever shall you do now
With such a mem'ry?
Poor little Sallie!
Poor child! I can't see my way at all."

"Now don't you go on like that, Lidy.
Half of me's happy an' I ain't wishful to lose it.
You were plumb right,
Tellin' you's done me a heap o' good.
The happy half's drowndin' out the other quicker
every minute.

What am I goin' to do?
I settled that when I was pressin' out my dress.
I'm goin' to take in boarders.
I do enjoy havin' company around.
I sent a couple o' notices to the Boston papers yesterday.
I'll bring the answers right along to you
Soon's I git any.
P'raps I can git a real nice young man,
An' maybe a mother an' daughter.
I should love to have a romance goin' on
Right under my own roof.
That house has had nothin' but gloomy things happen in it
Long's I can remember.
Now I'm goin' to give it smilin' things if I can git to do it."

"But, Sallie, what will the minister say?
You can't go on goin' to meetin'
With this on your mind.
You'll have to tell him."

"I shan't do no such a thing.
I guess I'll give up goin' to meetin' for a spell.
I been steady at it all my life,
But I can't see's any good come from it.
I'm goin' to be a errin' sperit for the rest o' my days,
Hell can't be no worse nor what I've had;

Anyhow, I'm goin' to resk it.
If the boardin' works, maybe I'll take a house down to Boston
An' keep at it winters.
Oh, we're goin' to have a beautiful time, Lidy!
An' I'll git my folks to hire Oren's automobile for picnics an' things.
My! If ther' ain't Oren now, drivin' in t' th' barn.
I must be goin' on along home.
Don't you tell him, Lidy.
If I'm goin' to live with a sin on my conscience
The fewer knows it the better.
An' don't you worrit 'bout me a mite,
Like's not I'll be sorry as can be one o' these days,
But I can't see my way to it now.
I'll be up agin soon's the answers come.
Ain't the snow-drops lovely with the moon on 'em?
I don't know as I rec'lect a forwarder spring,
Ther'll be cherry-blows in next to no time.
No, I won't stay, dear.
I'll just git me a bit o' supper,
An' set that new knittin' stitch on a needle 'fore I go to bed.
I'm so glad I come in."

AMY LOWELL.

ESPIED

In Harden Woods—Yorkshire

SOFT-FOOTED, and with mind aware,
O'er mould with ancient beechmast strewed,
Where, shadowed, leaned the listening air,
I stole into the serious wood.

A stoat stood, fixed in still surprise
(The outer world grew less and less).
A shrewmouse, hunched on passive thighs,
Blinked faintly in the quietness.

I seemed to hear the pulsing toad
Breathe, crouching on the mossy ground.
Across a pool a shadow strode,
It seemed to make a filmy sound.

So glassy still was all, the eye
Felt each shy movement like a noise:
O'er creaking grass an ant crept by;
Rustled the web at the spider's poise.

No grave breath in that conscious place
Moved a frail leaf; yet quiet stirred
Like silence in a poet's face
When all is felt and nothing heard.

From lone gray cloud and brooding air
The quiet soaked me, mind and bone.

Merged in that meaning muteness there,
I leaned against a breathless stone,

And listened, and felt. Till, startling me,
The couchant landscape poised to spring;
Clouds burned to brightness: suddenly
That mild wood was a passionate thing!

A burst of glory split the sky;
Trees doffed their modest shade and sprang
Forward as with a phantom cry,
While tense sight leapt, and taut nerves sang.

From flying gloom before, behind,
Fleet ardors to a bright embrace
Sped forth, and with one tingling mind
Rapt earth and heaven leapt face to face.

There was no sound; yet, in eclipse
Of thought, my thrilled enthralled heart knew
The meeting of a myriad lips,
The passionate green, the passionate blue!

That sylvan rapture stung my soul—
I shared a Dionysian bliss:
Earth locked with heaven, one tremulous whole,
Clung in the abandon of a kiss.

While tiptoe stood my peering brain,
With ardent foot the spell I broke.

Grieved was the ground with sudden pain,
The nervous stillness, frightened, spoke;

Scared gesturing boughs, protesting, threw
Their wizard angers round the wood;
Stark lights and vivid shadows flew
Winged through the sound-shocked solitude.

Then instantly, like love surprised
That, startled, turns from ecstasy,
Nature, aloof, aroused, disguised,
Stepped gravely back and stared at me.

Blood rushed through heart and brain; no more
The stoat stood passive, foot in air:
The tranced toad leapt, the squirrel swore;
Life spoke and startled everywhere.

Swift like a bright-maned lion sprang
The wind, and, scattering silence, hurled
From far the cry, the lusty clang
And challenge of the temporal world!

James A. Mackereth.

THE BEE

HERE on the window sill she lies
Dead, with pollen-laden thighs;
Stocks and scented pinks there were
That from the parlour beckoned her,
Who came, yet had not wit to win
Out the way that she flew in.

She by centuries of bees
Was furnished with efficiencies,
Yet no device of all her pack—
Scissors, baskets, combs nor sack,
Nor the barbed wonder of her tail,
Nor hollow tongue will now avail.

Now she must batter her poor head
Against the pane till she fall dead,
Now for want of mother-wit
She must lie with folded feet,
And to hive will never bring
The honey of her harvesting.

RUTH MANNING-SANDERS.

CONTACT

All that I knew of you was a sherbet-smeared
palm
And a mouse-brown top-knot tied with a once-pink
bow.
And all that you knew of me
Was a random hand
Gripped suddenly that you might cross
St. Giles' Circus in security.
I did not see your eyes, nor you mine;
My face to you
My body to you,
Were nothing.
I was to you of less significance than the island
in the middle of the Circus.
For a brief moment
My hanging hand was to you
A convenience
Which, when you reached the kerb, you dropped
swiftly and in silence.
The traces of your palm's contact were wiped from
my fingers eight years ago;
But you—
Indifferent infant, set ever upon your own pursuits
—Stick still within my grudging memory,
Inexplicably persistent.

Susan Miles.

Fat Freddy Brown has breathed heavily and regularly
All through the lesson.
He has stared with pale eyes, unillumined by any apparent understanding,
In the face of his teacher.
His teacher's voice has droned on, helpless,
Unaware of conviction,
Or of any capacity to convey
Mystic experience.
Meagre and cold, the lesson has dwindled to nothing.
The children have flatly sung
"There is a green hill," and have gabbled,
In unreluctant dismissal,
A graceless collect.
The dejected teacher is buttoning Freddy Brown, still breathing heavily,
Into his outdoor coat.
Suddenly she is aware
That Freddy is mumbling a remark.
Stooping, indifferent, to listen,

She hears him mutter.
"That was good what you was telling us:
That was good what you was saying."
Uncomfortable, silent, with brows slightly knit,

The teacher is staring, baffled,
Into a pair of fish-cold eyes,
Unillumined by any apparent understanding.

Susan Miles.

MIDNIGHT LAMENTATION

When you and I go down
Breathless and cold,
Our faces both worn back
To earthly mould,
How lonely we shall be;
What shall we do,
You without me,
I without you?

I cannot bear the thought
You, first, may die,
Nor of how you will weep
Should I.
We are too much alone;
What can we do
To make our bodies one:
You, me; I, you?

We are most nearly born
Of one same kind;
We have the same delight,
The same true mind.
Must we then part, we part;
Is there no way
To keep a beating heart,
And light of day?

I could now rise and run
Through street on street

To where you are breathing—you,
That we might meet,
And that your living voice
Might sound above
Fear, and we two rejoice
Within our love.

How frail the body is,
And we are made
As only in decay
To lean and fade.
I think too much of death;
There is a gloom
When I can't hear your breath
Calm in some room.

O, but how suddenly
Either may droop;
Countenance be so white,
Body stoop.
Then there may be a place
Where fading flowers
Drop on a lifeless face
Through weeping hours.

Is then nothing safe?
Can we not find
Some everlasting life
In our one mind?
I feel it like disgrace

Only to understand
Your spirit through your word,
Or by your hand.

I cannot find a way
Through love and through;
I cannot reach beyond
Body, to you.
When you or I must go
Down evermore,
There'll be no more to say
—But a locked door.

HAROLD MONRO.

Of ice. Deceptively reserved and flat,
it lies "in grandeur and in mass"
beneath a sea of shifting snow dunes;
dots of cyclamen red and maroon on its clearly
defined pseudopodia
made of glass that will bend—a much needed in-
vention—comprising twenty-eight ice fields
from fifty to five hundred feet thick,
of unimagined delicacy.
"Picking periwinkles from the cracks"
or killing prey with the concentric crushing rigor
of the python,
it hovers forward "spider fashion
on its arms" misleading like lace;
its "ghostly pallor changing
to the green metallic tinge of an anemone starred
pool"
The firtrees in "the magnitude of their root
systems,"
rise aloof from these manœuvers "creepy to be-
hold,"
austere specimens of our American royal families,
"each like the shadow of the one beside it.
The rock seems frail compared with their dark
energy of life,"
its vermillion and onyx and manganese blue in-
terior expensiveness
left at the mercy of the weather;

"stained transversely by iron where the water drips
down,"
recognized by its plants and its animals.
Completing a circle,
you have been deceived into thinking that you
have progressed,
under the polite needles of the larches
"hung to filter not to intercept the sunlight"—
met by tightly wattled spruce twigs
"conformed to an edge like clipped cypress
as if no branch could penetrate the cold beyond
its company;"
and dumps of gold and silver ore enclosing The
Goat's Mirror —
that lady-fingerlike depression in the shape of the
left human foot,
which prejudices you in favor of itself
before you have had time to see the others;
its indigo, pea-green, blue-green, and turquoise,
from a hundred to two hundred feet deep,
"merging in irregular patches in the middle lake
where like gusts of a storm
obliterating the shadows of the firtrees, the wind
makes lanes of ripples."
What spot could have merits of equal importance
for bears, elk, deer, wolves, goats, and ducks?
Preempted by their ancestors,
this is the property of the exacting porcupine,
and of the rat "slipping along to its burrow in the
swamp

or pausing on high ground to smell the heather;"
of "thoughtful beavers
making drains which seem the work of careful
men with shovels,"
and of the bears inspecting unexpectedly
ant hills and berry bushes.
Composed of calcium gems and alabaster pillars,
topaz, tourmaline crystals and amethyst quartz,
their den is somewhere else, concealed in the
confusion
of "blue forests thrown together with marble and
jasper and agate
as if whole quarries had been dynamited."
And farther up, in stag-at-bay position
as a scintillating fragment of these terrible stalag-
mites,
stands the goat,
its eye fixed on the waterfall which never seems
to fall—
an endless skein swayed by the wind,
immune to force of gravity in the perspective of
the peaks.
A special antelope
acclimated to "grottoes from which issue pene-
trating draughts
which make you wonder why you came,"
it stands its ground
on cliffs the color of the clouds, of petrified white
vapor—

black feet, eyes, nose, and horns engraved on dazzling icefields,
the ermine body on the crystal peak;
the sun kindling its shoulders to maximum heat like acetylene, dyeing them white—
upon this antique pedestal—
" a mountain with those graceful lines which prove it a volcano,"
its top a complete cone like Fujiyama's
till an explosion blew it off.
Maintaining many minds, distinguished by a beauty
of which "the visitor dare never fully speak at home
for fear of being stoned as an imposter,"
Big Snow Mountain is the home of a diversity of creatures:
those who "have lived in hotels
but who now live in camps—who prefer to";
the mountain guide evolving from the trapper,
"in two pairs of trousers, the outer one older,
wearing slowly away from the feet to the knees";
"the nine-striped chipmunk
running with unmammallike agility along a log";
the water ouzel
with "its passion for rapids and high pressured falls,"
building under the arch of some tiny Niagara;
the white-tailed ptarmigan "in winter solid white,
feeding on heather bells and alpine buckwheat";
and the eleven eagles of the west,

"fond of the spring fragrance and the winter
colors,"
used to the unegoistic action of the glaciers
and "several hours of frost every midsummer
night."
"They make a nice appearance, don't they,"
happy seeing nothing?
Perched on treacherous lava and pumice—
those unadjusted chimney-pots and cleavers
which stipulate "the names and addresses of per-
sons to notify in case of disaster—"
they hear the roar of ice and supervise the water
winding slowly through the cliffs,
the road "climbing like the thread
which forms the groove around a snail-shell,
doubling back and forth until where snow begins,
it ends."
No "deliberate wide-eyed wistfulness" is here
among the boulders sunk in ripples and white
water
where "when you hear the best wild music of the
mountains it is sure to be a marmot,"
the victim on some slight observatory,
of "a struggle between curiosity and caution,"
inquiring what has scared it:
a stone from the moraine descending in leaps,
another marmot, or the spotted ponies with "glass
eyes,"
brought upon frosty grass and flowers
and rapid draughts of ice water.

Instructed none knows how, to climb the mountain,
by "business men who as totemic scenery of Canada,
require for recreation,
three hundred and sixty-five holidays in the year,
these conspicuously spotted little horses are peculiar;
hard to discern among the birch trees, ferns, and lily pads,
avalanche lilies, Indian paintbrushes,
bears' ears and kittentails,
and miniature cavalcades of chlorophylless fungi
magnified in profile on the mossbeds like moonstones in the water;
the cavalcade of calico competing
with the original American "menagerie of styles"
among the white flowers of the rhododendron surmounting rigid leaves
upon which moisture works its alchemy,
transmuting verdure into onyx.
Larkspur, blue pincushions, blue peas, and lupin;
white flowers with white, and red with red;
the blue ones "growing close together
so that patches of them look like blue water in the distance":
this arrangement of colors
as in Persian designs of hard stones with enamel,
forms a pleasing equation—
a diamond outside and inside, a white dot;
on the outside, a ruby; inside, a red dot;
black spots balanced with black

in the woodlands where fires have run over the ground—
separated by aspens, cats' paws, and woolly sunflowers,
Fireweed, asters, and Goliath thistles
"flowering at all altitudes as multiplicitous as barley,"
like pink sapphires in the pavement of the glistening plateau.
Inimical to "bristling, puny, swearing men
equipped with saws and axes,"
this treacherous glass mountain
admires gentians, ladyslippers, harebells, mountain dryads,
and "Calypso, the goat flower—
that greenish orchid fond of snow"—
anomalously nourished upon shelving glacial ledges
where climbers have not gone or have gone timidly,
"the one resting his nerves while the other advanced,"
on this volcano with the bluejay, her principal companion.
"Hopping stiffly on sharp feet" like miniature icehacks—
"secretive, with a look of wisdom and distinction, but a villain,
fond of human society or the crumbs that go with it,"
he knows no Greek,

"that pride producing language,"
in which "rashness is rendered innocuous, and
error exposed
by the collision of knowledge with knowledge."
"Like happy souls in Hell," enjoying mental
difficulties,
the grasshoppers of Greece
amused themselves with delicate behavior
because it was "so noble and so fair";
not practised in adapting their intelligence
to eagle traps and snowshoes,
to alpenstocks and other toys contrived by those
"alive to the advantage of invigorating pleasures."
Bows, arrows, oars, and paddles for which trees
provide the wood,
in new countries are more eloquent than else-
where—
augmenting evidence for the assertion
that essentially humane,
"the forest affords wood for dwellings and by its
beauty stimulates
the moral vigor of its citizens."
The Greeks liked smoothness, distrusting what was
back
of what could not be clearly seen,
resolving with benevolent conclusiveness,
"complexities which still will be complexities
as long as the world lasts";
ascribing what we clumsily call happiness,
to "an accident or a quality,

a spiritual substance or the soul itself,
an act, a disposition, or a habit,
or a habit infused to which the soul has been persuaded,
or something distinct from a habit, a power—"
such power as Adam had and we are still devoid of.
"Emotionally sensitive, their hearts were hard";
their wisdom was remote
from that of these odd oracles of cool official sarcasm,
upon this game preserve
where "guns, nets, seines, traps and explosives,
hired vehicles, gambling and intoxicants are prohibited,
disobedient persons being summarily removed
and not allowed to return without permission in writing."
It is self evident
that it is frightful to have everything afraid of one;
that one must do as one is told
and eat "rice, prunes, dates, raisins, hardtack, and tomatoes"
if one would "conquer the main peak" of Mount Takoma
this fossil flower concise without a shiver,
intact when it is cut,
damned for its sacrosanct remoteness—
like Henry James "damned by the public for decorum";

not decorum, but restraint;
it was the love of doing hard things
that rebuffed and wore them out—a public out
of sympathy with neatness.
Neatness of finish! Neatness of finish!
Relentless accuracy is the nature of this octopus
with its capacity for fact.
"Creeping slowly as with meditated stealth,
its arms seeming to approach from all directions,"
it receives one under winds that "tear the snow
to bits
and hurl it like a sandblast,
shearing off twigs and loose bark from the trees."
Is tree the word for these strange things
"flat on the ground like vines";
some "bent in a half circle with branches on one
side
suggesting dustbrushes, not trees;
some finding strength in union, forming little
stunted groves,
their flattened mats of branches shrunk in trying
to escape"
from the hard mountain "planed by ice and pol-
ished by the wind"—
the white volcano with no weather side;
the lightning flashing at its base,
rain falling in the valleys, and snow falling on the
peak—
the glassy octopus symetrically pointed,
its claw cut by the avalanche

"with a sound like the crack of a rifle,
in a curtain of powdered snow launched like a
waterfall."

MARIANNE MOORE.

A MEDITATION UPON SORCERY

A CAT, by a leafless tree,
  Steadily watching
Above it, a window half open,
    Black and hollow,
Where stands a cage of brown or golden birds.
Above, three storeys more of innocent windows:
  Plastic, featureless.

My eye has found the stage but finds no actors.
  Nor can imagination,
Call-boy of the mind's theatre,
  Fill me my stage to-night.

What use for witchcraft in a world so old and
    rigid
  That every path but one
Leads to the mountain of glass?
What need to conjure in a world so old and subtle
    That every word and thought
Moves its appropriate stone?

A. L. MORTON.

FROM A HILLTOP

Here all the valleys, now, are dim with sleep,
And roadways have forgot the feet of men;
The pale stars climb their purple slopes like sheep,—
And there is quiet, here, and peace again.
The farms are folded in their plotted squares,
And mists like slumbers gather where they lie,—
And here above the world a silence fares
Wider than earth and deeper than the sky.

O heart, take home, take home this world of stars,
And valleys . . . and dim mist . . . and dreaming hill!
Bear in the breast, through better streets and wars,
This hour of peace, this time of being still,
And these long slopes of sky where stars have gone,
The slumbering farms . . . and darkness coming on.

David Morton.

REMEMBRANCE

O PLACES I have seen upon the earth,
Your silence is not virginal any more,
For one still wanders there whose mortal birth
Was mine. And now, gaze bent on buried lore,

A child, a youth, a man,—O, is it I?—
In silence stands by every lake and tree,
Or leans lost poring face where, flickering by,
The bright stream moves on to another sea.

And all is changed, the shining fields, the host
Of shapes who were myself years long ago.
'Tis these who live! And I am but a ghost
Exiled from their sole light and jealous glow.

Ah, no; it was not I who, laughing there,
Walked with the crowd, and there, in solitude,
Wandered a summer's day through windless air,
In a once-visited far-northern wood.

It was not I from morn till noon who went
The white road's length to the white noisy town
So many years ago. That light is spent;
And he who saw it, long since fallen down.

And he no less, the child who, walking grave,
Saw beauty of tiny weed, of moss and stone,
And all his comrades, diffident and brave:
They each have perished, silent and alone.

I can no more have speech with them, nor know
The light which lights them. Vaster than the sea
The yawning distances o'er which we go
On our frail paths of sundering destiny.

EDWIN MUIR.

Soft and clear is the night; if now abroad
Roams any wind, it roams not here but far
In highest heaven, where the ghostly sword
Of lightning flutters between star and star.

Soft and clear is the night; if any sound
Wanders black space, it wakes no thunder here
But must among the silent stars rebound
And lose itself above the planisphere.

Soft and clear is the night; beyond the steep
The midnight city, like a dying coal,
Sends up a light, faint as the hopes which sleep
Brings to the murderer ere his doom-bell toll.

The habitual stars, that, veiled in their disdain,
People the amphitheatre of the sky,
Look down once more, who have seen such varied
slain,
On this Arena wherein Man must die.

Implacable stars, beauty immense, remote,
Cyclical order, which no human ache
Can vex, being motioned on an asymptote!
Supreme silence which no cry can break!

If cry could break, I, Vision among men,
Outcast between their City and these Skies,

How could I plead great Nature spare us when
The City is more implacable than these eyes?

Nature your substance, stars, and its effect,
Motion decreed; but to proud man She gave
Self to create and order to elect,
And man—stars, stars!—has made himself his slave.

Omnipotent Nature, you who bring to birth
Strange forms, which you both can and do destroy,
Wherefore this long indulgence to the earth?
This cruelty or compassion to your toy?

If it be cruelty, no more prolong
Pastime unworthy. If compassion, learn
Not man himself inflicts more tyrannous wrong
Than to grant life to such as life would spurn.

Howbeit I sue no respite yet for Man,—
Though self-enslaved, still dimly does he guess
That he is slave and thus is wiser than
The stars, whom knowledge does not curse or bless.

And, if for ever he must forge his chain
With those same hands whereby he might be freed,
Yet starlike spirits, with no stars' disdain,
With his dark spirit nightly intercede,

And by their tears and by such hands as grope
To bless them, though the many hands deride,
By faith impossible, by hopeless hope,
By love defeated, Man is justified.

ROBERT NICHOLS.

PIETA

They all looked up to me;
They told the children to do what I did,
And everything I did they said was good:
Mary is kind, Mary is true,
Mary is pure in every act and thought,
Mary is chosen of the Lord.

My paleness was my purity of soul,
I could not make up tales; I told the truth.
I was not strong enough to scold or order men,
So all men called me kind.

Many the lads who sat to spin their words of love;
They never touched me with their hands, but all
their words were gentle.
Mary can smile at us as if the moon were
smiling.
Mary, your little foot is light upon the earth—
The grass is hardly bent, and yet you ride it
like a world.

The older men would nod, the women would say:
Your mother knew no pain when you were
born,
And you know nothing of the world of pain.
Sin?—it is like the serpent of some Eden
Unshadowed by a tree of good and evil,
The Eden where you live.

And Joseph, who was old, would look into my eyes
And smile like any lad.
And so one night I wandered to the moon
When work was done.
The sheep were all asleep inside the fold
And I sat quite alone among the fields.
It seemed as if the moon had left the sky
To play within my eyelids
And on my face and neck and hands.
My eyes were closed, but soon I felt the light
Upon my body too.
It crept up from my feet, and up my wrists—
Gentle as I, but strong as man.
It touched my lips, I opened them;
It streamed between my lips
There was no taste or feeling,
But yet it gave me power—a yielding, broken
power
To feel and know.
Myself was lost.
This was not I—
This palpitant flame of swift delight,
This trembling pulse of a wheeled universe.
The light still lay upon me—
Heavily, cruelly,
More terrible than the sun, and no less rapturous.
My breath came quickly,
And breath met mine,
Surging its glory through my new glory
Until the two were one:

One self that wrapped about the world;
One world, wrapped in two selves,
Lacking nothing—
Unity.

How long I know not, for there was no time:
Infinite cycles passed in a twinkling,
And I relived ages I never knew.
I was the teeming earth that God had made,
I was the ark that he had not destroyed,
I was the Kingdom of our Israel,
I was the many-voiced Miriam,
The golden calf and the tables of stone;
I was the power of Jezebel and Jael,
And Sheba's gold.

Upflooding through my body,
Great swinging currents bore me out to depths
I never knew could be.
Garments enfolded me of satin sheen, heavy with gold;
Perfumes, sweeter than incense, wafted me
Whither great words and beautiful knelt to my bidding;
And delicate thought, ideas more tenuous
Than any of my ken as maid.
And all these beings that were me,
And all these things,
Whirled through me
Ever more effulgent,

Instantly and completely,
Crashing and clinging,
Mysterious and magical,
Turning and shining;
More various, more shimmering,
More cruel in the agony they tore from me,
More scarlet in their ecstasy,
Piled ever higher
Toward some uncharted summit of enchantment
Where joy and pain are one

When—
Suddenly—
As a twig snaps—
It was gone;
And I lay cold,
Mary the girl,
The simple girl,
The girl whose words and thoughts
Were of the common day and night.

I opened my eyes.
Slowly and stupidly I looked about—
Where had it come from?
Far into the East
Against the paling sky
I saw a bird,
A whiter bird than ever flew in Palestine,
Fly till it met the sun.

Mary Ellis Opdycke.

Away with thought. To-morrow lies still-born
And shrouded in the grave of yesterday.
There is but Now and many-fashioned Clay . . . .
"A moral," quoth he, "in the windy spume
Of yearly-springing corn;
And cock-crow by the barn gate in the morn;
Salvation in time's ever-changing plume,
In spring-tide and in neap-tide and the spray
Recurrent on the thorn."

Take empire of the Moment. In the pale,
Impalpable, unreal reality
That men call life
The past and coming, what do they avail?
If I but look I see
The silent-footed slayer and his knife,
Symbol of instantaneous immortality.
Sing sacramental waters on the shore;
Sing sweetly solemn stars on heaven's floor;
Sing simple, silly stream, sing Now
Or Now is o'er.

I can make lilies blossom in the snow
And strew the sky with silver stars at noon.
Aye, if the day be bright I wheel the moon
About my little kitchen to and fro
Because I will it so.
But the steel walls that hedge the Moment round

Not all the trumps that all the Joshuas blow
Nor philosophic flutes shall sing them to the ground.

HUGH ORANGE.

REPLYING TO THE MANY KIND FRIENDS WHO ASK ME IF I NO LONGER WRITE POETRY

Music is writ by the deaf
and poems by the blind.
The sage who utters wisdom
has little on the mind.
Before I had to use them
to find my way about,
Mine eyes would let in Beauty
and shut Time out.
When I was able
to keep the world hid,
Beauty would nestle
under each lid.
When I heard nothing,
there echoed in my ears
Certain cadenzas
from the Symphony of Spheres.
And in a mind
sinless of thought,
Fragments of wisdom
casually caught.

Now, what would you?
Mind, ears and eyes
must guard me like sentinels
and serve me like spies.

They must be wide open
to see and to hear
All that is obvious
and all that is near,
And to think shrewd thoughts
with logic and reason,
And know what the time is
and what's the season.

So while I must think
and see and hear
And hold my soul taut
to grapple Fear,
The leering tyrant
of the world I live in,
Swift to crush me
if I give in,
Beauty cannot come
stealing from behind,
Nor fragments of wisdom
catch in the mind.
The best I can do
is now and then to fashion
Some measured thought
with guarded passion.
But till I'm blind again
and deaf, I assure you,
I'll write no poems
to lift and allure you.

SHAEMAS O'SHEEL.

LAUDABO

For days complete of sky and sun
And miracle of summer sea
And all the singing rapture won
Through thoughts completed ecstasy
For these I thank with reverence meet
The Deity of things complete.

But still for things more dear and far
The sunset slanting through the rain,
The face of some adventurous star
That hailed me from the plashy lane.
For these with deeper love I thank
The deities of lesser rank
The rulers of the things apart
Masters of gleams and vanishings
The guardians of the utmost marge
The Lords of uncompleted things
Who had my questing thought in charge
When, through dim brain and wearied heart,
And overweighted spirit thrilled
The rapture of the unfulfilled.

Seumas O'Sullivan.

DECEMBER

THOUGH sunset found the storm grown still,
The West a crown of liquid gold
Set on the forehead of the wold,
And hope of stars above the hill;

Yet stole, the patient eve to mar,
An earth-born fog that stifled all,
Drowned the pure twilight in a pall
And blotted hope of any star.

Close kin with the December days,
I know their hearts and mine they know:
Through rains of dawn and winter's blow
We travel our familiar ways.

And when, at even time, the sky
Awakens hope of stars still hid,
How oft upgathering mists forbid
Their light upon our destiny.

Let other days and other men
Welcome the dawnlight overhead,
And know the blue and gold, and tread
The summer paths beyond our ken;

More glad and glorious they than we,
More swift of foot and apt to feel;
Yet something poorer for that steel
Your stern, grey passing shares with me.

EDEN PHILLPOTTS.

WILL CRAIGIE TO WILL CRAIGIE
(BETWEEN THE SHEETS)

I.

Is that you at the foot of his bed, Will Craigie?
Is that blind mist arisen o' the body o' him;
Mist o' the furniture varnished wi' sleep
Lumped four-legg'd on the rickety bed?
Why do carouse a' this hour, purpose or no?
Demmit, I had o' known thou'rt a thief i' the night
As thin as the counterpane, as chill and as white,
Yon shivering sheet o' the carcase of him.
Soul is it? soul o' the second-hand trumpety?
Lord o' the twisted, this be his soul?
Do it speak, have it tongue, do it ken of itself,
Or come it unmindfu', and godlessly?
Have it never been tol'
Of the mornin's and noons when body's awake?
Do it be devil mayhap out o' hell acome
Bringing the smell of the charnel or for some
The shudder, the tremble, the ruption, the quake?
What it'll have o' this thing it is smoke of?
Making beauty p'raps or laughter or whiskey
Smooth as its linin', hot as its tread
Hurrying the bedposts to reach a last transport
In a cosmical snore, Will Craigie the boy!

II.

Tell me, apparition, whereof you blow, whereto?
Art tenant or but hired man?

Stalking the grim ramparts why,
Afeard of the deep shadows where the dawn steeps itself
In grey; morning hath mysteries as well,
Huge earthy clouds under the loam;
Canst dig? Walking over the timid sleeper,
Should his sleep be an awakening as 'tis a wakefulness, he will be less kind:
Did he not last evening speak with thee,
Tell thee avaunt and hide thee well,
That were he to awake to strength he'd cleft
His body's emanation, soul that is smoke of him,
Or render it back to flame or on to ash?
Apparition of Will Craigie, or are you but
The hazy washday steam of Will the slut?

III.

Catch me again, muddy ghost, if you can,
I'll sleep in the mornin' like a night-shift man!

HARRY ALAN POTAMKIN.

JANE SNEED BEGAN IT: My poor John, alas!
Ten years ago, pretty it was in a ring
To run as boys and girls do in the grass—
At that time, leap and hollo and skip and sing
Came easily to pass.

And precious little innocents were we!
Said a boy, "Now shall we let her be the fox?"
Or a girl, "Now which of you will climb the tree?"
We were quick-foot the deer, strong-heart the ox,
Business-man the bee.

JOHN BLACK SAID: I'll interpret what you
mean.
Our infant selves played happily with our others,
The cunning me and mine came not between,
Which like a sword is, O sweethearts and brothers
Numberless, who have seen.

JANE SNEED: I tell you what I used to do.
For joy I used to run by river or wood
To see with what speed all came trooping too;
Those days, I could not quit you if I would!
Nor yet quit me, could you.

JOHN BLACK RETURNED: But now, Jane, it
appears,
We are sly travellers, keeping good lookout

Against the face whose ravage cries for tears;
Old friends, ill-met; and supposing I call out,
Draw nigh, friend of these years!—

Before he think of any reason why,
The features of that man resolve and burn
For one long look—but then the flame must die.
The cold hearts in us mortally return,
We may not fructify.

JANE SNEED SAID BITTERLY: Why, John, you
are right.
We were spendthrifts of joy when we were young,
But we became usurious, and in fright
Conceived that such a waste of days was wrong
For marchers unto night.

JOHN BLACK SAID: Yes, exactly, that was when
It happened. For Time involved us: in his toils
We learned to fear. And every day since then
We are mortals teasing for immortal spoils,
Desperate women and men.

JANE SNEED CONSENTED: It was nothing but
this.
Love suffereth long, is kind—but not in fear.
For boys run banded, and simple sweethearts kiss,
Till, on one day, the face of Death appear,
Then metamorphosis!

JOHN BLACK SAID: To explain mistrust and wars,
Theogony has a black witch with hell's broth;
Or a preposterous marriage of fleshless stars;
Or the Fiend's own naked person; or God wroth
Fingering his red scars.

And Philosophy, an art of equal worth,
Tells of a flaw in the firmament—spots in the sun—
A Third Day's error when the upheaving earth
Was young and prime—a Fate reposed upon
The born, before their birth.

JANE SNEED WITH GRIM LIPS MOCKED him: Who can tell—
Not I, not you—about these mysteries!
Something, John Black, came flapping out of hell
And wrought between us, and the chasm is
Digged—and it digged it well.

JOHN BLACK IN DEPRECATION SAID: Be sure
That love has suffered a most fatal eclipse;
All brotherhoods, filialities insecure;
Lovers compounding honey on their lips
With deep doubts to endure.

JANE SNEED SAID SLOWLY: I suppose it stands
Just so. Yet I can picture happiness—
Still wander lovers in the fairy lands

Who, when stalks Night the dark and fathomless,
Consort their little hands;
And well, John Black, those darkened lovers may,
For hands hold much of heat in little storage,
And eyes are flickerless torches good as day;
The flame of each to the other's flame cries Courage!
Soon heart to heart slide they.

Thus unafraid they keep the whole night through,
Till the sun of a sudden glowing through the brushes,
They wake and laugh, their eyes again are blue,
They run to the fields, and apprehend the thrushes,
And print the fairy dew.

JOHN BLACK'S THE LAST SAY THEN: O innocent dove,
This is a dream. We lovers mournfully
Exchange our bleak despairs. We are one part love
And nine parts bitter thought. As well might be
Beneath ground as above.

JOHN CROWE RANSOM.

PARTING AT DAWN

If there was a broken whispering by night,
It was an image of the coward heart,
But the white dawn assures them how to part—
Stoics are born on the cold glitter of light,
And with the morning star lovers take flight.
Say then your partings; and most dry should you drain
Your lips of their wine, your eyes of the frantic rain,
Till these be as the barren Cenobite.

And then? O dear Sir, stumbling down the street,
Continue, till you come to wars and wounds;
Beat the air, Madam, till your house-clock sounds;
And if no Lethe flows beneath your casement,
And when ten years have brought no full effacement,
Philosophy was wrong, and you may meet.

John Crowe Ransom.

FROM A PIER

From a pier one puts away
To ports he never knew;
To a pier one comes again
With dreams made true.

But I go not and come not back;
I only stand and wait
To see what ship will bring to me
One who is late.

Jessie B. Rittenhouse.

Once in ten years the woodman with his axe
Felling slim undergrowth from stubby boles,
Shall bare the auburn flooring of the copse,
Its ridges, and the sandy rabbit-holes.
Then shall he pare the twigs, and set in stacks
His tall young ash and stripling chestnut poles
That presently shall serve the wreathing hops,
And he shall peel the bark of shorter wood
Clean as a cat in pattens, smelling good,
And sharpen to a point for stakes and spiles,
The whittled slivers flying as he chops,
And lash the shaven wood in ready piles,
For this is woodman and his livelihood.

But in late autumn with his ropes and guys
He goes along the peaty forest-tracks
To seek the nobler prize
Blazed with the timber-master's scarlet mark.
Oak will he fell in spring, to gain the bark,
But ash and elm in winter, and the beech
In the short daylight of November thrown,
By Christmas shall lie open, fair to bleach,
As white and hard as bone.
The smoke coils blue above the little camp;
There, in the clearing at the fourfold wents,
On mould of leaves forgotten, reeking, damp
And heavy with autumnal redolence,
Leviathan lies prone.

Bare as the royal antlers of a stag,
His branches fork, and strive to scorn the ground,
Being born for heaven and for heaven crowned,
But man to dust and trees to timber fall,
And comes the hearse or comes the timber wain
With nut-brown team, patient to stand or haul,
And like a naked savage bound in chain,
With limbs once proud that now through ordure
drag,
A captive moves upon his way in thrall;
And that live spirit that once lit the tree,
Fled as a bird when first the ruin came,
Sees only death, defeat, and consequent shame,
Great dignity become a husk, as we
Looking upon the dead demand in vain
Some future use for such mortality,
But being as gods to fallen trees, we know
The lowly uses not within their ken,
Re-fashioning their form to live again,
A humble phœnix stripped of memory;
Or, bent to the necessity of men,
Ordain that on a prouder ploy they go;
Beyond the forest stretches still the sea,
And men may send the pines that topped the crag
Through the great anger of the ocean gales.

Their past is sure,
Those woods deep-rooted in the grave of time,
Temples of myth and piety and fear,
Lovely, obscure;

Dark was the ilex in the Grecian vales,
Crooked the olive, murmurous the lime.
No woodsman but had heard the Dryad cry,
No girl but knew the goat-foot faun was nigh,
And saw the satyr through the branches leer,
And fled from those too peopled solitudes
Into the open fields of maize and rye.
And women still have memories of woods,
Older than any personal memories;
Writhen, primeval roots, though heads be fair,
Like trees that fan the air with delicacies,
With leaves and birds among the upper air,
High, lifted canopies,
Green and black fingers of the trees, dividing
And reaching out towards an otherwhere,
Threaded with birds and birds' sweet sudden
gliding,
Pattern and jargoning of tree-tops, such a world
Tangled and resonant and earth-deriding,
Now with the raindrops' rounded globes bepearled,
And little sullen moons of mistletoe,
Now fretted with the sun, when foxes play
At fables on the dun and foxlike ground
Between the tree-trunks, and the squirrels go
Scuttering with a beechnut newly found,
To vex the pigeon and to scare the jay.

Of such a tall and airy world are they,
Women and woods, with shadowed aisles profound
That none explore.

Birches, frail, whispering company, are these?
Or lovely women rooted into trees?
Daughters of Norsemen, on a foreign shore
Left hostage, while the galley draws away,
Beating its rise and fall on manifold oar,
Beating a pathway to the broken coasts,
Forgetful of its ghosts?

There is a kinship: down the open ride
She strays, eternal nymph, and glances swift
Into the ambushed depths on either side,
Now fears the shadows, now the rift,
Now fears the silence, now the rustling leaf
That like a footfall with a nearing stride
Startles the stronghold of her unbelief;
Disquiet rises on an ancient tide.
Woods are her enemies, yet once she went
Fleeing before a god, and, all but spent,
Slipped from his arms, herself become a tree.
She has forgotten: wood's an enemy;
She has no knowledge of the woodland tracks,
Only a knowledge of her jeopardy,
And with lost steps, neglectful of her pride,
Stumbles towards the music of the axe.
There, brown old sylvan god, the woodman plies
His craft, and drives his wedge,
Spitting to ease the rub of tool on hands,
And she arrested at the clearing's edge
Awakened stands,
With panic terror fading from her eyes.

V. Sackville-West.

AT THE GRAVE OF HENRY VAUGHAN

Above the voiceful windings of a river
An old green slab of simply graven stone
Shuns notice, overshadowed by a yew.
Here Vaughan lies dead, whose name flows on for ever
Through pastures of the spirit washed with dew
And starlit with eternities unknown.

Here sleeps the Silurist; the loved physician;
The face that left no portraiture behind;
The skull that housed white angels and had vision
Of daybreak through the gateways of the mind.
Here faith and mercy, wisdom and humility
(Whose influence shall prevail for evermore)
Shine. And this lowly grave tells Heaven's tranquility . . .
And here stand I, a suppliant at the door.

Siegfried Sassoon.

An image-dance of change
Throngs my dim-sighted flesh.
To music's air-built mesh
Move thoughts forever strange.
I am so woven of sense
And subtlety uncharted
That I must vanish hence
Blind-souled and twilight-hearted.

Soon death the hooded lover
Shall touch my house of clay
And life-lit eyes discover
That in the warbling grey
I have been early waking,
And while the dawn was breaking
Have stolen afield to find
That secrecy which quivers
Beyond the skies and rivers
And cities of the mind.

Till then, my thought shall strive
That, living, I may not lose
The wonder of being alive,
Nor Time's least gift refuse.
For, though the end be night,
This wonder and this white
Astonishment of sight,
Make hours of magic shine

And heaven's a blaze and bloom
Of transience and divine
Inheritance of doom.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON.

THE PLEASURE GARDENS

"Les vieilles bacchantes des banlieues."
ARTHUR RIMBAUD.

Do you remember, Damon, the hot noons
And the paths bordered with great unknown gardens
Of apes grown men? . . . There through the iron gates
Of the fantastic gardens grow great flowers
And those small heart-shaped flowers that have the eyes
Of little sisters in our long-dead childhood.
You are a child again, with your young face
Plunged in the calyx of the great dream-flowers
Smelling them . . . they die away like music
Within your brain, like all the sounds of youth.

Then from the landscape a dark note of menace
Sounds from the fantastic darkness of the forests. . . .
There are vast plains beyond our sight, afar;
And there amid the green baize thickened leaves
Live all the creaking gods of kitchen gardens. . . .
Outside their realm, in chickeny wet grass
The farmer and the gardener as they pass
Have faces that seem feathered like the wind
Or Mercury . . . and Darkness hides behind
Those faces like the empty wind's blind mask.

And deep within the broken laurel groves
These that seem our own prophetic shadows,
The old Bacchantes of the suburbs, sit
Where sunlight wraps their unloved bones with warmth,—
Stare like the dead at something none may see,
Mumble unspoken words that died long since
For want of one to listen, year on year:
"I sit a little, warming in the sun
This crumbling dust of mine, and to my heart
I hold a little blue-eyed fair-haired ghost—
But oh, he never needs my breast-milk now—
My breasts have withered for the want of him
And I have nothing left for Death to take."
"How happy are you with your little ghost!
But I am old and cold and have small greeds,
My dreams are all the same, of daily needs.
For oh the poor dreams fade away, my dear.
Perhaps they have grown tired; we hardly hear
Their music now; or else they were too young
To bear with us; for the harsh world is tired,
We make the world impatient, grown so slow.
All day we creep through the unending city. . . .
The vulturine wide light that knows no pity
Devours our agèd hearts, defenceless, old.
Yet though our eyes are dim with age, we know
The unfriendly faces, and our friendless bones
Feel their unburiedness, struck with death's chill."
So in the broken branchèd laurel groves
The old Bacchantes of the suburbs sit

While sunlight wraps their unloved bones with
warmth,—
Stare like the dead at something none may see.

But here in this unknown and flashing summer
weather
We walk among the bosquets, once more young,
So lovely now that we may walk together!
Oh the strange people, . . . the child paladins
From some fantastic delicate pilgrimage,
The young mamas with shadows lengthening
Into great birds that sing among the gardens
Songs from some far-off land,—the distant music!

EDITH SITWELL.

ON A NAME SCRATCHED UPON A WINDOW

Deep do the letters bite that spell the name,
Though the last strokes waver as the hand grows weak,
Holding firm the diamond lest it slip and fall.
Did fruit like a lodestone hang outside the window,
Or were the shining fences of the rain pitched there?
When it rains—
Like the spider's web linking leaf to leaf
The name glitters out and links the lines of rain;
When the sun burns free—
The letters like a pattern of the frost stay on the glass.
Here, where he traced it, will the name still live
Dwelling like a mote in the eye of all who see it,
As though he had fixed it in the very eye of time,
Till time breaks, shattered, as a sheet of glass.
Deep do the letters bite, they mark the sky,
Till you open wide the window and the letters find their shadow
That hides in the wall until it calls out in this echo
As a cave will shout the name back in answer out of its darkness,
Though all else is dead there save your rattling tongue.
The letters find their shadow and the thin echo calls to them,

Misty is the glass as though a breath had tarnished
it.
For he stands once more in the window while he
cuts the name,
And turning lets his hand fall, and feels the light
beside him,
And in that moment, till echo answers emptily,
The name becomes the body for as long as time
stands still.

SACHEVERELL SITWELL.

AGED NINETY YEARS

The loneliness of her old age flashed clear
The day her body took its pilgrimage
Out of the little house where she had lived
Into the sunless house of brick-red dust.

The darkened room was empty, save for ghosts
Of those she loved who hovered near the place,
Unseen but felt, trying familiar chairs.

Impassioned grief for those who die in youth,
The grief that holds the village in a mood
As spellbound as a frozen Arctic river,
Was absent here; and only vague relief,
Mingled with tenderness like that which flows
From soft wet mornings after autumn rains—
Relief of water-lilies in a bowl—
Entered the quiet room where thin white hands
Were folded long and limp across her breast.

No throng of people followed to the grave,
A handful merely, these not friends of hers,
But of a daughter who watched over her
Throughout her failing years and closed her eyes,
Wishing perhaps a score of times the end
Might hasten on for respite to them both.

Within the half-forgotten ancient plot
The choking weeds and cemetery moss

Were blotting out the old New England names—
Seth, Adoniram, Hepzibah, Desire—
And curtaining the broken marble slabs,
As her stern faith had dimmed the marble tones
Of life beneath a puritanic gray.

Leaving the last grave in the double lot,
They turned their faces toward the flaming west
And felt the spirit of the autumn sunset
Put gently out its hand to push away
The spectre of oblivion whose shade
Was stalking through these gray neglected slabs;
Foreshadowing like a winter night the hour
In which the proudest plinth the yard could boast
Would sink, like her, in chilly arms of earth.

WILBERT SNOW.

THAMES VALLEY IN WINTER

The sleeping earth around her breathes
This winter-veil of mist that wreathes
Her lowland Thames; in sleep profound
She lets her leaves fall and her fruits;
Her sap sinks down, her thrusting roots
Rest from their labour underground.

Look to the clouds; they rise and shape
Along the hills, yet soon escape
To earth, then back to heaven again.
They run through all things, they are dew,
Vapour and hail and ocean, too,
Sap and the blood within thy vein.

Behold the fallen leaf; as yet
It keeps its form, but lying wet
And trodden down, it soon will be
Part of the next-year mould to feed
The bramble-rose, the thrifty weed:
Phantoms are all the forms you see.

A barn of stone, a roof of thatch:
The walls were once a rocky patch
Upon the hillside, and the roof
Was scooped up in a sower's hand,
Scattered as corn on fallow land,
Then clambered from the earth aloof,

Till mower, thresher, miller, sped
The dazed corn into flour, that fed
Men who went out and died abroad;
Straw stayed for thatching, straw and stone
Will tumble down and soon be strown
In dust that writhes along the road.

A whispering army of skeletons
Stand the dry reeds and rushes, once
Green knights who drew their swords in June;
So feeble now as though the ghost
Of Cadmus raised a shadow-host;—
I, like the wind, am out of tune.

Earth sleeps?—Nay, earth can never wake,
Nor thought of spring in winter take;
No memory lives from change to change.
A drama where no plot is tracked,
And actors know not what they act:
Whither, O Truth, beyond their range?

Spake Philalethes on this wise:
Let not thy heart dwell in thine eyes,
But plant thine eyes deep in thy heart.
My eyes look on this hedgerow where
Illusion spins her web of air
And buds begin while leaves depart.

There comes along the river-marge
A plodding horse that draws a barge;

I see the load of sand and lime,
The painted cabin and the stack
Where tea-time smoke keeps falling back;
An old man steering asks the time.

He hears and then sings out to me,
"It soon grows dark now after three,"
Thinking of long bright evenings gone.
Earth stirs, awakes, eludes the maze,
And looks on spring through winter haze,
While down the stream he journeys on.

WILLIAM FORCE STEAD.

DAYLIGHT SAVING

Poor Miss Meig! For an hour or more
She has sat on the porch that fronts her door;
In scratchy coat and crazy hat,
Gray skirt and cracking shoes she has sat
Watching the motors go up, go down,
For the one that will give her a lift to town.
Her dull brown eyes grow worried, and stare;
She thinks a little of the wind in her hair;
But her hands in her lap lie quiet and thin,
Head nods, and thinks she's already been,
Spent a two-dollar bill and a dime . . .
And forgets she's an hour ahead of time!

"Let me see . . ." What *had* she seen?
Fields baked brown and trees still green,
Hills and valleys and stacks of hay,
Sailboats keeling in the wind on the bay.
What she'd smelt! Where did she shop?
Where? Where? Head goes drop;
Up fly hands to incredulous eyes,
She sees the road and the morning skies,
The dusty nasturtiums beside the porch,
The glimpse of sea to the right of the larch . . .
Poor Miss Meig! What time can it be?
Her hat all crooked; breath cracks, "Dear me!"
All a-flutter, how she must feel
When she sees at her door, *the* automobile!

"Well, now, well!" Up she gets,
Umbrella, basket, and shawl forgets;
All a-tremble, and laughing so,
Down she plumps in the big tonneau;
Then she sees the lady who sits
Beside her there and quietly knits . . .
"Dear Mrs. Brown, forgive me, do;
So excited I didn't see you!"
Off goes the car and over the bumps,
While the lady knits, and Miss Meig's heart thumps,
She gasps for breath, and closes her eyes,
She feels like a bird that flies and flies;
And then she thinks she's sailing a boat;
And then she thinks of the dust in her coat.
"Dear-oh-dear! Not so fast!"
She says each bend in the road her last;
And still beside her the lady knits
As poor Miss Meig is losing her wits.
But now at last they come to a smell
Rank as the rankest breath from hell,
The stench of kelp on the salty rocks
And drying fish on the codfish-docks.
The car slows down; she opens her eyes
And laughs and smiles and chokes and sighs;
Rich Mrs. Brown can't walk for gout,
But when the car stops, Miss Meig gets out.

Miss Meig has all afternoon to waste,
But gets all hot in her flustered haste;
Twice she's gone to the very same store,

But didn't know she'd been there before!
"Let me see!" A pound of rice,
Three dried herring, and an ounce of spice;
A pair of rubbers, number ten . . .
And then she buys them all over again!
Now upstreet for an underskirt,
A pair of gloves that won't show dirt . . .
Can that be all? She looks in her purse,
And sees a half-dollar for better or worse.
"Dear-oh-dear, how the money flows!"
As into the postcard store she goes,
Writes two cards to a distant friend
And then she hasn't much more to spend.
Forty cents left . . . May no one see! . . .
Miss Meig looks 'round. Oh me, Oh me!
Through a swing door she slides to sin,
And plunks down her forty for a glass of gin.
Miss Meig, may Heaven forgive, if it see
This first little, last little, sordid spree!

Rich Mrs. Brown continues to knit;
Time goes, but she never notices it;
Miss Meig, as she chokes on the very last,
Thinks, "Oh my, how the time has passed!"
Out she goes, and spry is her step;
She trips down the sidewalk, hep, hep, hep;
She goes to the shop where she bought the skirt;
She goes to the grocer's and tries to flirt;
Her motor is waiting down the way,
But after all, she must say good-day!

But first into every shop she must go
And thinks that the town at large must know,
Let gossips whisper and church-bells peal,
Of her first mad ride in an automobile!

Rich Mrs. Brown was knitting still
When poor Miss Meig came, tired and ill,
But rich Mrs. Brown must never know
Miss Meig feels a sinner from top to toe;
Miss Meig looks sad, and off they go.
The air is cool on her faint, hot head;
She thinks of the silly things she has said,
Remembers she left some money somewhere,
But that is the least of things she must bear.
The world is heaving upside-down
As the motor rolls from the dusty town,
But, into the country come at last,
The dreadful feeling is almost past.
Sick Miss Meig, she looks around
And sees the beauty of grass and ground;
A sudden wonder has come to birth
In quick, new love for the sun-washed earth;
She breathes the air and loves its feel,
And the rolling sway of the automobile;
She looks far up to the cloudless sky,
And hills and fields that are moving by;
She sees the golden light of the hay,
The sheen of willows on a summer's day;
Now by the windy bay they run,
She sees the waves click-clack in the sun,

A leaning schooner hoist pearly sails,
The sea-wind move in the meadow-swales;
She sees the shore's long curving reach,
And bright young people run on the beach;
She looks at rich Mrs. Brown, who sits
And looks at nothing, but only knits;
She sees an old man fish in a stream,
Her mind flows out, joins his in a dream;
But then they come to another bend,
And the clear sea-view has come to an end;
Miss Meig leans out, and waves good-by . . .
But Mrs. Brown never swerves an eye.
Miss Meig could cry but wants to shout
When she sees blue asters coming out;
She watches valleys and lakes and hills
With clouds above them till her glad heart thrills;
She feels the sweet hill-wind in her hair . . .
Hat topsyturvy, but doesn't care . . .
She feels the sun on hands and face,
And laughs when the motor's pulses race;
Her soul has swung to the mountain-tops
When suddenly the motor stops.

She smiles, and wipes the tears from her eyes,
And thinks she has been in paradise;
But no, here, here is her cosey house
To welcome back from her carouse;
Miss Meig gets out. "Oh, thank you so,
Dear Mrs. Brown, you never can know . . ."

But when she has stepped to the dusty lawn
And turned around, the car has gone.

Poor Miss Meig, she stands at the gate,
And cries, and wonders, and calls it Fate;
She stands in the sun till her poor head reels,
Stands and watches the automobiles,
Stands until her tired brain seems
Bewildered by strange and curious dreams:
She dreams that rich Mrs. Brown still sits
And knits, and knits, and knits . . . and knits.

EDWARD STEESE.

Menelaus

INCREDULOUS of this he nightly saw,—
Astounded, with a shudder of growing dread,
He searched her loveliness from feet to head,
Nor in the marble found a fleck or flaw.
Perfection subject to its lonely law
Flamed, cruel, from the shadows of the bed,
Above whose pearl he bent discomfited,
Sad with the sense of utter beauty's awe.

Chain after chain he felt her sorcery creep
In everlasting tendrils on his breast,
And knew for him there could be no more sleep
Unhaunted by the dream of her desire;
In token of which godhood of unrest,
Terror and joy fell on him like a fire.

Paris

Far-off he heard upon the truce of night
The wail of kindred women for their slain;
Far-off he saw across the shrouding rain
The foeman's leaguer, arrogant with light,
And turned to where, inimically bright,
Her beauty burned immaculate of stain.
Yea! it was worth the hatreds and the pain,
The gleaming ranks disastrous in the fight!

This thing was of the ages. This was she

For whom the nations gathered as a sea
That foamed in death, and ebbing, left a wrack
Of swords and helms, of chariots and spears,
And, on the red horizon of the years,
The memory of sails that come not back.

Ulysses

Worth it or not? His wisdom could not say,
However much he searched his heart to find
The enigmatic nature of his kind,
That life could not appease nor death dismay.
So frail, so sad, so terrible were they!—
A transciency that love or lust made blind,—
A dust uplifted by the eternal Wind,—
Shadows of shadows battling for the clay.

In Ithaca, resounding with his fame,
He dreamt of those forlorn, immortal tears,
Of helms gone under in the sea of spears,
And saw the tearless constellations climb,
Uncaring how that loveliness might flame
Upon the turrets of recorded time.

GEORGE STERLING.

FOUR POEMS TO A WAVE

I

I HAVE seen you walk upon wet stone
With white arched feet, and slowly lift a proud
High instep, wavering as before a throne
And turn again, blown backward, to the crowd
As though you had renounced your sovereignty
And were content to be
A whisper in the roar, an undertone.

II

I saw her dip her white hand into you
One summer day, so that her fingers shone
And quivered vaguely pale through green and blue,
As moonlight falling in an undertone
With paleness not its own
But gathered from the night it quivers through.

III

There is a depth that I have never seen
Beneath your colored glance, your wayward step.
You have known murder, robbery and rape;
With arson only have your wanderings been
Unstained, and between
Your arms have lain the jackal and the ape.

IV

But oh, vain thought that these words were enough
To blame or praise you with! How can I tell

What power inspires you? Easier probe love
Than dream the hands that curved the hermit shell
Do blindly grope and move,
Mad and monotonous, from pole to pole.

H. Stuart.

CEASE NOT TO BE A MYSTERY

Cease not to be a mystery to me
Lest I in terror should forsake you quite,
Having more wonder in a cloud at night
Or the vague trembling shadow of a tree.

In shadows or in stones is sure to be
Magic unsquandered—never sold to sight—
Beneath the leaden hill-top some strange might
Secures itself, though I delve endlessly.

Alas, then, if I strive and if I win
To where you are—O let your steady grace
Withhold itself; though I be pledged to follow,
Give up no depth, let no wild word begin—
Lest even love show too distinct a face
And his enchanting heart look hollow, hollow.

Roberta Teale Swartz.

ADVICE TO A YOUNG ROMANTICIST

To R. P. W.

Young man, you hold your head
Too high in the air, you walk
As if the sleepy dead
Had never fallen to drowse
From the sublimest talk
Of many a vehement house.
Your head, so turned, turns eyes
Following a vagrant West;
Fixing an iron mood
In an Ozymandias' breast,
And because your clamorous blood
Beats an impermanent rest
You think the dead arise
Westward and fabulous:
The dead are those whose lies
Were doors to a narrow house.

Allen Tate.

THE FAN

I SCREEN her looks when she would shun
Unwelcome eyes, and one by one
I open out my sheathes as wide
As peacock's pride beneath the sun.

A silken plume the peacock shows
To fan the lily and the rose;
All pride of lovely hue he hath
Along the path whereon he goes.

And even as these flowers are fanned,
So I like any peacock stand
Beside the rose that is her face,
The lily's grace that is her hand.

I hear her beating heart. I list
Far more than ever lover wist;
When I am furled I have for bed
Her hip instead of her white wrist.

I am her warder. Unto me
She opens her heart's mystery;
Her sighs move in me as a shell
Made voluble with all the sea.

WILFRID THORLEY.

NIGHTMARE BY DAY

THERE was no track
In the new snow.
Where could I go
Except go back
Where, row on row
The trees stood black.

This, then, was peace.
Yet something said no.
Something below
The whispering trees
Made the warm flow
In my pulses freeze.

From where I stood,
Ten yards or so
Into the wood,
I watched it go—
A trail of blood
Deep in the snow.

Nothing to show
Where it began.
No trace of man;
No other foe
More deadly than
One chuckling crow

What was this dream?
I do not know.
But still I seem
To wait for the blow
And the red stream
Upon the snow.

LOUIS UNTERMEYER.

YET NOTHING LESS

This is the top. Here we can only go
Back to the world, that Lilliput below;
A child's toy village scattered in the snow.

What have we come for then? This stubborn height
Scarce moved an inch to meet us. Black and white
Seem colder still in this ash-ivory light.

What saves these frozen trees from coming out
And waving threatening arms as though in doubt
Of what it is that we have come about?

What gives these common curves, these hills that part
As casually as schoolboys, power to start
Cries from the lips and tears within the heart?

Nothing so much, perhaps, yet nothing less
Than that which wintry earth knows to express—
Love that no longer lives on loveliness.

Louis Untermeyer.

REST

He with his love now lies
  The long night long
And hears the hours pace up the sky
  Unfaltering throng;

Late evening later grows,
  He does not sleep,
He thinks of life, of death, of her
  His locked arms keep.

The little clock chimes out
  One, two;
Still on his breast his dear love lies
  The close night through;

When dawn falls like a star
  Into their eyes,
The lost is found, and each they seem
  Somehow more wise.

Bernice K. Van Slyke.

OCTOBER SUNSET

THE world shall pass in flame, the preacher
saith . . .
O, thought most terrible!
Yet, day by day,
In flame the world of daylight finds its death,
Beneath the flush of sunset fades away.

Far over range and peak the clouds to-night
Burn like a crater whence red fires are thrown;
Yet no man trembles; 'tis a common sight,
A dear and daily miracle, well known.

Perhaps—unless the dreamer dreamed amiss
And hoary prophecies were rhapsody—
On some clear, exquisite autumn night like this
The last men, awed but unafraid, shall see

In splendour reaching to the eastern skies,
Illuming sea and stream and mountain-spire,
The loveliest sunset viewed by human eyes . . . .
And so the heavens and earth shall pass in fire.

ALBERTA VICKRIDGE.

Do you remember, Cynthia,
How the great corn-waggons used to lurch out of the gate
And sway down the little white road,
Brushing the hedges on either side
Till both of them were caught and strewn
With wisps and stalks of corn
With sometimes the ears on it still,
Hanging there,
Swaying over the twigs?
Do you remember, Cynthia,
How strange the sea used to look
Appearing above the waggon
As it went down the hill—
A broad blue bar,
Hard, against the paler blue of the sky?
Do you remember the great golden twenty-acre field
And the reapers,
Their cries and laughter?
And the little dusty edge of the stubble all the way round
Poppy-strewn, and strewn with nettles and dock,
Where sometimes playing and exploring in the hedges
We'd start a couple of partridges
With whirr and scuffle
And plaintive cry?
Do you remember how we used to ride the horses

Going down the swathes between the stooks,
And how the long golden lads
Who seemed to us giants then,—
Leonard, Mike, and the rest,—
With their lithe arms and sunburned faces,
Would pitch the golden stuff high over our heads,
And gather the straggling bits that still remained
With long sweeping curves
Of their two-pronged forks
And then cry 'Hold-jee'
For the great old horse to move on
To the next lot of sheaves?
Do you remember the rise of the shafts
Beneath our sand-shoes,
And the feel of the buckles and straps of the harness
Digging into our bare legs
As the cart moved on?
You used to wear a little sunbonnet
From which your black curly hair overflowed
And blossomed about your warm cheeks;
And sometimes, impatient, you'd push it back,
And shake your curls out free
In the wind and the sun.
And when we were astride the horse together
You used to put your arms round me
And laugh over my shoulder;
I could feel your breath on my cheek
And your hair, tickling.
And then I used to feel what a man I was

To do great and adventurous things
In the years to come—

Do you remember old Father John,
Thigh-deep at the top of the great stack,
With the harvest moon at the full
Swinging up out of the deepening skies
Behind him—
And still the huge waggons lumbering up below
With their burden of golden grain
To be pitched on top,
And the ceaseless rustle and whisper of corn,
And lads' voices and laughter
Through the moonlit dusk?
We used to leave them there,
And wonder how long they'd work on into the night,
By the gleam of the moon.
We used to leave them there
And run home down the darkening lanes,
With our shadows flitting in front of us
And the whisper of bats' wings above.
Do you remember?

GEORGE VILLIERS.

AUNT HANNAH

I'm sorry for the words she never used—
The out-at-heel, the hopeless, the afraid;
For giggling adverbs, righteously accused;
For adjectives beclouded and dismayed,
That can not live their reputations down;
For verbs that have brought shame upon their trade.
There is a name that never comes to town
But he is greeted with a grinning shout.
I know Aunt Hannah never spoke that noun.
She had no use for words that mince and pout;
Would catch and shake them, soundly box their ears
And charge them to "stand up now and speak out."
The word that would be coaxed, that sulks and leers,
Learned from her stout indifference to meet
Death honorably—old and full of years.

And there were words of hers we feared to greet—
Shining and proud as gods that stride the sky.
On winter nights, her house became a street
In war-time, where, white-lipped, with heads held high,
Making the moonlight ring with shrill command
And windy flare of music, they marched by.
Ourselves and all our things, a futile band

Of whimpering conspirators, lay curled
Together in the dark. But all we planned
Was but a billowy web, where through they hurled
Themselves with ease, shaking the beams and braces
Of our dear fellowship—and rocked our world.

And there were pilgrim words from far-off places,
Hinting of olive orchards, sailing ships,
Of flails and spinning-wheels and yellowed laces,
Of springs where a Greek maiden comes and dips
Her jar and laughs at her own laughing eyes.
These words were pilgrims at Aunt Hannah's lips.
They'd fill her sewing-room with piping cries
Of welcome, all a rainy Saturday,
And make the twilight rich with their good-byes.
But when the dark limped down the hill and lay
Out in the orchard, howling in the wind,
One pilgrim word would stretch his legs to stay
And tell us lads how gorgeously he'd sinned.
O sweaty camel-driver from Bagdad!
Stark wayfarer from Trebizond or Ind!

One word Aunt Hannah spoke was ever sad,
Far sadder than the day it signified,
A word to take the heart out of a lad—
A bitter word that loitered through the wide
And arid tract of Sunday all day long.
Stiffly you walked and never turned aside;
Not once you smiled, and everything was wrong

To you. How all the gayeties would run,
Leaving behind them withered bits of song,
When you peeped in! The fragile thing called fun
Turned to a guilty ghost, when you came near,
O Sabbath—drearest word beneath the sun!

Oh, I can see her smile to find you here,
Caught in the flimsy web of words I make
For her, to whom all words were somehow dear.
And often I have seen her stand and shake
Her head above this page. 'Tis hard, indeed,
That she, who loved each word for its own sake,
At whose brave lips all captive words were freed,
Must leave her tale of them for me to tell;
That her dear, living words should sob and bleed—
Her jolly "Welcome!" and her grave "Farewell"—
Upon another's lips in her great need.

HARMON C. WADE.

GIFTS

I HAVE had lovers and would-be lovers.
One brought burning lips;
One, a restlessness such as hovers
Over ships;
One brought a whirlwind of merrymaking;
One, his first-born song—
(For a little I might have been his for the taking,
Not for long.)
So many disturbing gifts—even the singing—
And not a giver guessed
I shall be won by a lover bringing
Only rest . . . .

MAY WILLIAMS WARD.

"Newmarket or St. Leger,"

Who, in the garden-pony carrying skeps
Of grass or fallen leaves, his knees gone slack,
Round belly, hollow back,
Sees the Mongolian Tarpan of the Steppes?
Or, in the Shire with plaits and feathered feet,
The war-horse like the wind the Tartar knew?
Or, in the Suffolk Punch, spells out anew
The wild grey asses fleet
With stripe from head to tail, and moderate ears?
In cross sea-donkeys, sheltering as storm gathers,
The mountain zebras maned upon the withers,
With round enormous ears?

And who in thoroughbreds in stable garb
Of blazoned rug, ranged orderly, will mark
The wistful eyelashes so long and dark,
And call to mind the old blood of the Barb?
And that slim island on whose bare campaigns
Galloped with flying manes,
For a king's pleasure, churning surf and scud,
A white Arabian stud?

That stallion, teazer to Hobgoblin, free
And foaled upon a plain of Barbary:
Godolphin Barb, who dragged a cart for hire
In Paris, but became a famous sire,
Covering all lovely mares, and she who threw

Rataplan to the Baron, loveliest shrew;
King Charles's royal-mares; the Dodsworth Dam;
And the descendants: Yellow Turk, King Tom;
And Lath out of Roxana, famous foal;
Careless; Eclipse, unbeaten in the race,
With white blaze on his face;
Prunella, who was dam to Parasol.

Blood Arab, pony, pedigree, no name,
All horses are the same:
The Shetland stallion stunted by the damp,
Yet filled with self-importance, stout and small;
The Cleveland slow and tall;
New Forests that may ramp
Their lives out, being branded, breeding free
When bluebells turn the Forest to a sea,
When mares with foal at foot flee down the glades,
Sheltering in bramble coverts
From mobs of corn-fed lovers;
Or, at the acorn-harvest, in stockades
A round-up being afoot, will stand at bay,
Or, making for the heather clearings, splay
Wide-spread towards the bogs by gorse and whin,
Roped as they flounder in
By foresters.

But hunters as day fails
Will take the short-cut home across the fields;
With slackened rein will stoop through darkening
wealds;

With creaking leathers skirt the swedes and kales.
Patient, adventuring still,
A horse's ears bob on the distant hill;
He starts to hear
A pheasant chuck or whirr, having the fear
In him of ages filled with war and raid,
Night-gallop, ambuscade;
Remembering adventures of his kin
With giant winged worms that coiled round mountain bases,
And Nordic tales of young gods riding races
Up courses of the rainbow; here within
The depth of Hampshire hedges, does he dream
How Athens woke, to hear above its roofs
The welkin flash and thunder to the hoofs
Of Dawn's tremendous team?

DOROTHY WELLESLEY.

It was our love's Gethsemane, and you wept.
Around us, in the drab twilight, the little room
That had known our love, that had known our tears and our laughter, kept
Shamed silence. Silently 'round us rose the gloom—

And in the street the first few lamps were gleaming; day's
Last fire on garish windows glared. The light
Feebled. Over the huddled city's wastes and ways
Gravely and pitifully came the night.

Darkness—and from far off a whistle mourned.
The sands
Of time drew downward, but still no word was said,
No word—only your poor hands lying in my hands
So hopeless, against my shoulder your poor head.

You were so tired, you were so hushed, so fain,
Poor love, all blind with weeping; pinched and small
Your face shone in the glimmer—but I, who felt no pain
Save pity, I was so eager to end it all.

And I could not endure it; suddenly my heart
grew old—
In the gray evening, in the drab twilight—while,
one by one,
Your hot tears ached along my hands. O stern
and cold
I sat beside you, in that last hour, and you wept
alone.

. . . .

Such was the stage, appointed — with darkness
'round about—
For our youth's drama; pitiful and bare
The scene, no crowds applauded, no sorrowing
strings cried out,
But the eternal tragedy was there.

. . . .

Brief was our parting, very brief, and without a
word.
With a mute kiss we parted—you turned, and I,
Closing the door, in the outer hall-way heard,
Already as if from far away, your sudden cry.

That cry—what silences followed! What silences
haunt the space
Of the years grown wide between us. On barren
rhyme
I have wreaked my youth; I have followed a
phantom loveliness—your face
Fades in the hungry darknesses of Time.

But now, in my nights, now, in my loneliness I know
The bitter passion that moved those tears, and why,
When my life went home to you—when the tides groped—you shuddered so,
And the agony of that love, the dolor of that cry.

Had you foreseen, O wise and sad, the unkinder ways
My feet must wander on strange roads? Did you foresee,
Beyond that wilful hour, the desolate nights and days—
And the tears that I pitied so, were they shed for me?

O fatuous dream, that like a sword clove us apart!
Dear room, where once your sorrowing lips on mine
Trembled, where humbly for my proud and ignorant heart
You broke the bread and poured the living wine!

Love, I have heard it told, is God, and once Love found me—
Across my heart his very heart was bowed—
He came to me out of the darkness, his arms were laid around me:
But I was stubborn, I was foolish, and very proud.

Often, often now, in the silence of the after years,
In the night I remember your weeping. O my own,
In the darkness I have remembered them, your sacred tears
Shed for my sake, and how you wept alone.

JOHN HALL WHEELOCK.

THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY

Heaven is full of stars to-night; the earth
Lies hushed, as she shall lie some day, perhaps,
When life and death no longer trouble her—
No voice, no cry in the whole countryside.
The empty road rambles through field and thicket,
And in the road are prints of hoof and foot:
Along the surface of this lonely planet,
Now naked to the hunger of the stars,
Man and beast, on the old pilgrimage,
They passed together here—not long ago.

What was it they were looking for I wonder,
Or if, themselves, they knew? Where were they going?
Footsteps—always footsteps going somewhere—
What country is it that they all are seeking,
Who up and down the world by night or day
Move with such patience, always to one end?

Not the least sound. Not the least leaf disturbs
The immemorial majesty of heaven.
Footprints—only footprints going somewhere.

Wherever they were going, they are gone.

John Hall Wheelock.

TWILIGHT

Love, do you not see
The sunset-tinted heron,
Preening her breast feathers with her bill,
Amid the shuddering marsh-grass?
Like some reluctant dream she glimmers there,
While the waters ebb back to the slime.

Robin Wilde.

Let us keep tryst under the windy stars,
We who have laughed at Autumn, let us go
By wet roads to the hills, and watch the showers
Threaten the desolate west, our blood aglow
With Winter, and the weather in our hair—
The stormy woods around us, and the bare
Fields harvested, the last rook tumbled home
To his high crazy nest, and splashed with loam
The last cart rumbling to the turf-heaped shed.
I like you, this wild evening, with your head
Thrown back a little proudly, not so far
And yet as distant as that violent star
On the hill's shoulder. A bird's way is the best,
Or a young tree's in the Spring. We'll leave the rest
To the world. The innocent beauty of the sky
Is over us. Enough that you and I
Should praise the Winter. Some fantastic bough
With leaves half-fledged, or fields that wait the plough,
Distant silver of rain, the stars beyond,
Or swarthy cattle by some trampled pond
Breathing in darkness. I think you have found a way
To rout December. Hurtling clouds at play—
The sky's disaster magnificently spread
In battle upon battle overhead,
And beautiful with vague imagined fear,

You have taken all in one defiant gaze
Of passionate laughter. What is there to praise
But the naked earth, the ceremony of the year?

R. N. D. Wilson.

THE STAR

I AM her thought and she, who this conceivéd,
has, being absent, turned her mind away,
so that I glimmer too faint to be aggrievéd,
too fugitive to scold, and so must stay,
until her quickening beam revolve, and, seeing
all dark that was with her reflection lit,
she in the greatness of her starry being
sets this aflame, and makes a star of it.
For all her thoughts are stars, that hang unguessed
through the light-years of beauty, till they stir
some night of wonder, and rising in his breast,
all dark, astound love's pale astronomer.
Therefore be still, my heart! You nothing are
now, but may be, as once you were, a star.

HUMBERT WOLFE.

The little old lady
Was walking along the street.
She carried her head high though of small stature,
And although her ermine mantle was yellow with age
And her bonnet of an old fashion,
The little old lady
Looked like a well-born woman and moved like a queen.

Yet for all her composure,
Fear was in her heart,
For she had no knowledge,
No remembrance how she came into the street.
She remembered last walking alone in her garden
At Porto Fino, under the mimosas.
And here she was in England,
In a quiet street, approaching the door of her house.

"It is only a dream," she thought,
"I shall soon awaken."
Still fear was in her heart.
"I have lost my memory," she thought, "No one must know it."
So she came to the door of her house and felt for her key,
And the key was not there.

She laid her hand on the bell. It eluded her fingers.

A man walking in the street,
The quiet street,
Seeing her trouble, came to her aid courteously.
He would ring the bell. Hardly was his hand upon it
When she saw that the door had been open,
Open all the while.
She passed into the hall and on to the staircase.

The eyes of the great portraits
Hung on the walls.
Followed her now, just as they had always followed her,
Beautiful child, beautiful girl, triumphant woman.
The painted eyes followed her,
The little old lady,
Ascending the wide stairs in her empty home.

She came to the Library.
A fire burned on the hearth.
Her father sat beside it in the familiar attitude.
One foot stretched to the blaze, supple in its slipper
—The white head and the black brows were her own—
He leaned back in his chair
With eyes half closed,
His long slender fingers placed tip against tip.

So great was her joy,
Seeing her father,
She forgot all wonder, she forgot all incredulity.
"Father!" she cried.
He stood up and his arms were about her.
"O Father!" she said, "I have been so frightened.
I have lost my memory."
And he, caressing her—"Poor little Annie!"

Meantime the bell
Had hardly ceased to sound,
Pealing through the empty house.
Only a young maid-servant heard it and came,
Slowly unbarring, opened the heavy door.
A man stood on the step,
His back towards her,
Looking like one amazed up and down the street.

"I rang the bell," he said,
"For an old lady
Who stood on the step here, trying to ring it.
Now, all in a moment, the lady has vanished."
"What was she like, Sir?"
The maid enquired.
"A small woman, yet she looked like a great lady.

"She had crisp white hair
And black eyebrows
And an old-fashioned bonnet with wide ribbons

Tied under her chin"—"But that is my Lady.
O Sir!" cried the maid,
"That is my Lady.
Sir, she died abroad suddenly this morning."

But the little old lady
Did not know that she was dead.

MARGARET L. WOODS.

LEDA

THE great bird drops: the great wings beating still
Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed
By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,
He holds her helpless head upon his breast.

How can those terrified vague fingers push
The feathered glory from her loosening thighs,
And how can body laid in that white rush
But feel the strange heart beating where it lies;
A shudder in the loins engenders there
The broken wall, the burning roof and tower
And Agamemnon dead.
Being so caught up,
So mastered by the brute blood of the air,
Did she put on his knowledge with his power
Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?

W. B. YEATS.

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